

S E R M O N S

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

BY THE REVEREND JOHN GARNONS,

LATE CURATE AND LECTURER OF

ALLHALLOWS, BARKING, & LONDON-WALL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

PUBLISHED FOR THE BENEFIT OF HIS WIDOW
AND CHILDREN.

L O N D O N :

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VARIOUS SUBJECTS

BY THE REVEREND JOHN GARRARD

OF THE GREAT OXFORD CHURCH

ALL SAINTS, BARKING, & LONDON-WALL.

IN TWO VOLUMES.



PRINTED FOR THE REV. J. GARRARD, BY HIS WIDOW

AT THE PRESS OF THE REV. J. GARRARD

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S E R M O N S.

S E R M O N I.

ON PRAISING GOD.

Pfalm cvii. 1.

**O GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD, FOR HE IS GOOD;
FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER.**

PRAISING God is one of the duties required of us in this life, and is represented as what will greatly occupy the saints in the next. And how justly it is esteemed a duty now, the various blessings we enjoy sufficiently shew: and if our hopes of future happiness be well founded, then we may suppose that we shall be constantly employed in praising our Maker. And this employment will by no means be burdensome or disagreeable: for as the heart is naturally exhilarated on receiving good, and disposed to praise the author of it, the discharge of this duty is agreeable. The representation, therefore, of

the saints in glory as continually praising God, far from implying an insipid sameness, affords the pleasing hope of ever receiving blessings from him, which will both render praise a duty, and dispose them to discharge it cheerfully. The thought, therefore, of having such a duty imposed upon us is most comfortable and encouraging, since the obligation to discharge it will arise from enjoyments equal to our most ardent wishes. But even in this life the duty must not be neglected, since the blessings we now receive from God are numerous and various. Let us, therefore, consider in what manner we may discharge it best.

1. We must entertain a grateful sense of the divine benefits, we must frequently meditate on the loving kindness of God, which will excite in us a suitable affection or disposition of mind towards him. This was the practice of the ancient saints. They called to remembrance the loving mercies of God, which have been ever of old; they were gratefully affected by them, and blessed his holy name. And indeed all praise from man to God must be offered by the heart, to render it acceptable. One man may please another by outward expressions only, because he cannot

not discern the sentiments of his heart; but God, who is a spirit, and to whom all hearts are open, requires that we should worship him in spirit and in truth—that those expressions of praise and adoration which flow from the lips should be the effusions of the heart. And indeed all intercourse between God and man must be spiritual: for as God is a pure spirit, it is impossible for us to have any communion with him, otherwise than by our spirits. Hence it becomes necessary, in order to praise him worthily, that we entertain a lively sense of his benefits to us, and by frequently meditating on his loving kindness, produce in ourselves a grateful and reverential love towards him.

But further. When the heart is properly disposed to praise God, it will manifest this disposition by every suitable expression both in words and actions. It is a pleasure to a religious man to tell of all the wondrous works of God, and frequently will he break forth in some such soliloquies as David's. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name!" But the disposition of the heart will also manifest itself in the actions as well as words of the thankful man, and it will be his joy and

delight
B 2

delight to render himself acceptable to him of whose favour he has so just a sense. He will endeavour to render his whole life one constant expression of thanksgiving and praise, studiously and cheerfully obeying the divine precepts. Whatever his calling in life may be, it will not divert him from this duty; for his secular employments he will discharge in such a manner as to shew he has respect to the will of God therein; he will make reason and religion his constant guide. And the rational creature who makes a point of always acting agreeably to reason, best praises that Being who made him rational. Is he in a low station? He will be industrious, honest and content; he will consider the many temptations from which humble life is exempt, and the many quiet, though not splendid, enjoyments it affords. No desire to rise in life shall make him neglect the discharge of any duty, but he will study to act as best becomes him; and he that does this becomes an useful member, nay, an ornament to society, and shews the wisdom of his Creator. Is he in a high station of life? Still he will endeavour to act in his sphere as his understanding approves and points out to him to be the will of God. And surely he
1d gileb who

who endeavours to make the best use of God's gifts, praises him in the best manner. All men are endowed with reason, and whatever their station of life be, may act agreeably to it; therefore all men, rich and poor, may, in their several callings, praise God. As they are rational, they are capable of religion; they may lift up their hearts to God, and producing in themselves a devout and pious frame of mind, live under a continual sense of his Almighty presence and infinite goodness. And indeed this is necessary, in order to render the discharge of their secular offices an act of thanksgiving and praise; for though men perform them never so well, yet if they do not take the will of God into the account, there is no piety in what they do: they will be void of gratitude for being made rational, and enjoined such duties as are most agreeable to a reasonable mind. But he who takes the will of God into the account, makes every part of his business an act of praise; and will not only lift up his heart to God in ejaculatory prayers, but in his avocations from secular concerns will dedicate part of his time to the more immediate business of devotion. His constant desire and study will be at all times

engaged according to the will of his great Benefactor; and thus by yielding his members instruments of righteousness to God, shew forth his praises in the most effectual manner.

“ If we would acknowledge our obligations to the Supreme Being, in a pleasing and worthy manner, we must do it by a steady course of virtue and piety; for a holy and good life, animated by a sense of our obligations to the Divine Being, is a kind of perpetual hymn of praise to God, such a life is a proper expression of gratitude, as it is a continued act of obedience to the laws of God, and reflects the image of his moral perfections, the brightest glory of the Deity.”

But further. To complete the duty of praising God, we must do it in the great congregation. And this will be very pleasant to a grateful mind: because we are naturally inclined to celebrate before others *his* praises whom we love, and who has rendered us the most important services. Besides, when men are assembled together for one and the same purpose, they are more animated and disposed to perform what they have in view. They are encouraged by the sight of companions.

nions. It is so generally. A numerous meeting upon any occasion gives life and vigour to the cause they meet upon, and fills every member with zeal and alacrity. But more particularly does it in religion: for besides the countenance it affords pious men, it is a most cheerful and pleasing sight to behold our fellow-creatures assembled for the best of purposes, viz. to praise and adore their Maker.—A purpose that leads to the noblest end, their present improvement and future bliss.

And as it is the part of a grateful mind to be thankful for blessings received, so to praise him for them in the great congregation is an incumbent duty, and what God requires because of the many great advantages which result from publick worship: for it encourages those who are well inclined to continue in virtue and religion,—it fortifies them against the scorn and sneers of the world,—it animates them to persevere in their duty, and makes them emulous to excel and grow in grace. Even in the eyes of the world it gives a sanction to that cause which the wicked and profane endeavour to turn into ridicule. Besides, it is setting a good example to others, and excites them to re-

fect on the mercies they have received, and to praise and bless God for them. Men are naturally inclined to imitate others: example has a great influence on almost all mankind; and therefore it behoves all who would honour God, so to "let their light shine before men, that they may see their good works, and glorify their Father who is in heaven;" for surely that is a highly acceptable way of praising our Maker, which inspires others with sentiments of gratitude, as well as ourselves. Nay, our own minds will thereby become more strongly impressed with a sense of his goodness, and our hearts be rendered more joyous. When we see others assembled for the same purpose as ourselves, to adore God for his goodness:—when we hear them declare that his mercy endureth for ever, we are filled with gratitude and joy; we entertain more enlarged ideas of his benevolence, and cheerfully unite to sing his praise. These are advantages which render publick worship a very beneficial and very acceptable way of praising God.

But further. There are some blessings we receive, for which we cannot thank him any where with so much propriety as in a publick

publick assembly : such are all publick blessings ; which, because they belong to no man in particular, but to the whole body of the people, ought to be acknowledged by them assembled together for that express purpose. Private thanksgiving is not indeed to be neglected even for publick blessings ; and a grateful and pious man, will, at all times, give thanks for all the favours of God. But publick thanksgivings for general blessings are more particularly obligatory, and offered up with the greatest propriety ; for, what men, as a body, receive from God, they should in a body thank him for.—They should “ go into “ his gates with thanksgiving, and into his “ courts with praise ; be thankful unto him, “ and speak good of his name.”

Again. Praising and worshipping God in publick is expressly enjoined in scripture. The Jews of old were commanded to repair to the temple from all parts of Judea, three times in the year at least ; and morning and evening sacrifices were instituted for the convenience of those who could attend oftener. And in the New Testament it is enjoined Christians not to forsake the assembling themselves together to praise and worship God : and surely every grateful mind must willingly
obey

obey this command. Would we, then, shew ourselves grateful to God for all his goodness to us, we must not only thank him in secret, but praise him in publick—praise him in our lives for having created us rational creatures, by living soberly and reasonably—praise him in our thoughts, by serious and pious meditations on his wonderful perfections—praise him in our words and actions, by a diligent and cheerful discharge of every religious duty. Thus shall we in the best manner discharge this duty of praising God: a duty ever incumbent on us, because we are continually receiving fresh obligations from him: for his mercy is constant, and endureth for ever. Like the air we breathe, it perpetually surrounds us, though, alas! it be too often forgotten. With the dawn of day it awakens us to the joys of life, and at the return of night protects us from danger. What man is there but must acknowledge that mercy and goodness has followed him all the days of his life? That most of his vexations have arisen from his own folly, and all his happiness from the divine benignity? What man is there who seriously reflects but must acknowledge that the seeming pleasures which Heaven hath denied him were withheld in pity—

pity—some to prevent his being corrupted, others to afford him an opportunity of improvement in virtue and piety? Let him survey his past life, and he cannot doubt of this. What but mercy infinite hath protected his infant years, and during all his follies of youth and vices of manhood, hath still spared and supports him? and can that Being whose mercy is so eminently conspicuous towards him have any thing in view by what he denies him, but his real good and benefit? Can he have any other view than to call him from his follies, and improve his virtues? And to those who concur with the views of Providence, all things work together for their good. “The
“mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to
“everlasting upon them that fear him, and
“his righteousness unto children’s children.”

If, then, we have so much reason to praise God for his mercies to us in this life, much more so have we for that wonderful provision he hath made for our happiness in the next. His mercy endureth for ever. It is not confined to the short space of our existence on earth, it reacheth unto the heavens. Through mercy we were redeemed from sin and death by the precious blood of Jesus Christ;—through mercy we are made capable of becoming

coming heirs of eternal life ;—through mercy we are assisted by the divine Spirit of God to confirm us in all virtue and godliness of living, and to fit us for pure and endless pleasures. What a Being of goodness is this, who spares no price to procure us happiness, happiness that shall know no end and no alloy ! This last act of his mercy shines with such superior lustre, that great as all his other mercies are, they are absorbed by this : the heart cannot desire, the mind cannot conceive a blessing greater than this. The Son of God bled that man might be pardoned !—the Son of God died that man might live for ever, live in eternal glory ! Where shall we find expressions of gratitude equal to this benefit ? Human language is too weak for this purpose ; and the only way we can in any tolerable manner praise God for it, is by devoting ourselves, body and soul, in the fullest manner we can to his will. And surely he who has a true sense of the value of eternity, will cheerfully do this ; nay, will rejoice that it is required of him, as well knowing that God's laws are in their own nature most beneficial to man.

Let us, then, endeavour to express our gratitude to God by every means in our power.

power. Let the morning be witness of our thanksgivings for the protection of the night. Let the lifting up of our hands be an evening sacrifice for the blessings of the day. Let us discharge the duties of our station in such a manner as shall be most acceptable to our Creator: and let us always bear in our mind the infinite mercy of God in our redemption. Let us unite together in hymns of praise and thanksgiving for it. This is the least we can do; this is what, if we have a true and grateful sense of God's goodness towards us, we shall do; for what is there in this which a serious mind will not own to be reasonable, and an ingenuous mind esteem as most pleasant?

Devotion and piety, the expressions of gratitude to God, not only become us as creatures of his mercy, but are in themselves agreeable: for the worship of God is calculated to afford us the truest consolation,—to inspire us with more ardent love for *him* who hath so much loved us,—to increase our gratitude, and thereby render thanksgiving as delightful as it is reasonable: for never can it be disagreeable to praise him whom we love, and to thank him who is the Author of infinite good to us. And if we
employ

employ our short life on earth in praising God both by publick and private worship, and in living agreeably to his will, then shall we have reason to praise him throughout the countless ages of eternity. Then, when we shall actually enjoy that bliss which transcends our present conceptions, our hearts will be more elevated, and we shall eternally sing the praises of God, for the eternal joys we shall possess. We shall join with the holy throng who cease not day and night, saying, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power, for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." What prospect can be more desirable than that of being put in a state for which endless praises shall be due to the Author of it? What prospect can more encourage us now to be constant in praising, adoring and worshipping him—and, by living under an habitual sense of his goodness, and carefully discharging all the duties of religion, to prepare ourselves for that happy place where righteousness and peace and joy abound, which that we may all do, may God, of his infinite mercy, grant?

SERMON

S E R M O N II.

ON TRUE RELIGION.

Romans xiv. 17.

FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT MEAT AND
DRINK, BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE, AND JOY
IN THE HOLY GHOST.

IT has been the folly and misfortune of a great part of mankind, to confine their views of religion to its exterior (parts) form only; whilst its essence, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, is disregarded. Hence arise those sharp theological disputes which disgrace the name of Christian. For as the end men propose to themselves by religion is to acquire the favour of God, and naturally think they shall attain that end by becoming zealous advocates for those things in the support of which they imagine his honour is concerned,—so they are apt to make the whole of religion consist in certain forms and opinions, and to enforce the observance and belief of them on their fellow-creatures: hence, from superficial notions of religion, they become religiously wicked. To this may be added
pride,

pride, which will not suffer some folks to suspect themselves of having entertained erroneous opinions in a matter of such importance, and therefore they will not deign to examine at all, or do not consider with attention and candour the arguments of those who differ from them. Another reason why men are so uncharitably zealous in maintaining their religious opinions, is, that they have so framed them as to favour in some measure their own particular inclinations; they are, therefore, interested to have them established; for a general reception increasing their credit seems to give them *authority* also, which tending to confirm their own belief of them, consequently quiets their minds.

Different motives operate on different men to make them conceive variously of religion, when they do not draw their sentiments of it from reason and scripture. But as it is of the utmost importance to all that they should be right, so each of them will naturally be zealous to establish his own religious sentiments, though, if they be not drawn from the oracles of God, his zeal will be apt to be destructive to the interest of true religion. For example, if some men imagine that the essence of religion consists in particular ritual

tual observations, they will naturally endeavour to support them with an indiscreet zeal; for as they do not preach the pure religion of Jesus, but only their own crude notions of it, they are not actuated with his mild spirit, but with a destructive fury: for, in proportion to the magnitude of the object about which men dispute, their passions are inflamed, when not restrained by some superior principle. They cannot bear the idea of suspecting themselves wrong, where so great an object as their salvation is at stake, much less will they allow themselves to be so, when they can see no reason to prefer the opinion of their opponent; for whilst their understanding may discern the weakness of *his* arguments, their prejudices confirm their own. However indifferent any thing may be in its own nature, yet if a superstitious man conceive it to be a religious duty, he will zealously maintain, and perhaps endeavour to enforce the observance of it in others, if it do not interfere with his own particular lusts; but if it do, he may be induced, for the sake of his credit, to grant them a toleration.

Since, then, such dissensions and animosities and iniquities proceed from mistaken notions of religion, we should be cautious to

conceive of it only as what reason and the scriptures represent it to be, viz. as the purification and happiness of the inner man.

How many trivial points have been supported with a superstitious zeal, to the prejudice of real religion ! The Roman Catholics hold it a most defiling sin to eat meat on some particular days ; whilst others imagine, that to keep a solemn fast on a Friday, would be to worship the whore of Babylon. Forms, and ceremonies, and customs, so far as they are subservient to the promotion of true religion, are valuable ; but when they become subversive of charity, they are pernicious ; and at any time, to give them the preference over purity of heart, is to prefer the means to the end.

“ The kingdom of God is not meat and drink.” Many of the Jews who embraced Christianity, were zealous maintainers of the law of Moses. Men are naturally partial to the customs of their own nation, because early habits take a deep root : for in childhood and youth, outward objects engross the attention, and consequently make a deep impression on their minds. Whatever, therefore, comes to them recommended, not only by those whose example they are accustomed to

to receive with deference, but likewise by that of all about them, they readily adopt, as the most proper, which the force of habit and national vanity confirms to them as such. Their notions and views are framed accordingly, and their future judgment is almost always tinged with this sort of prejudice. The particular customs of one nation seldom have any intrinsic excellence in them, to give them a preference over those of another: yet when a man considers foreign customs, he is apt to despise them, whilst, at the same time, he approves those of his own nation; for to the former, which do not recommend themselves to his reason, he is a stranger: but his prejudices embrace the latter, and his vanity induces him to support them.

But no customs whatever are retained with such obstinacy as those which belong to religious worship. An example of this we have in the Jews, to whom St. Paul addresses the words of the text; "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink." Accustomed from their infancy to regard with reverence the rites and ceremonies which Moses, by God's command, instituted, and to consider the observance of them as productive of sacred pu-

rification, the Jews could not easily resolve to renounce them. However burdensome the law of Moses was, yet they were willing to retain it; for they imagined that, as it was of divine appointment, and separated them from the rest of mankind, so it was calculated to render them peculiarly holy. They did not consider, that as the whole merit of keeping the ceremonial law, consisted in doing it in obedience to God, so, when he no longer exacted it of them, they might safely lay it aside; but they imagined that the rites and ceremonies themselves were of such a nature as to render the observers of them righteous: they, therefore, not only determined to continue in the observance of them, but likewise urged the Gentiles to do the same, saying, "Except ye be circumcised and keep the law, ye cannot be saved." These were called Judaizing Christians. In opposition to them, the apostle says, that the kingdom of God, or true religion, does not consist in meat and drink, or in any outward thing whatever. Nothing exterior to the heart can constitute true religion, which consists in "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

It

It is not possible for religion to consist in any thing outward, as rites and ceremonies; for, if to men, these plainly appear inferior to integrity of heart and rectitude of manners, will not God require that those who worship should rather "worship him in spirit and in truth?" However useful, to enliven our devotions, ceremonies may be, or, however significant any rites be that we use; nay, even supposing them to be appointed by God's express command, even then, though religion exacts our compliance with them, yet religion itself rises higher than any of these things. Baptism, though instituted by Christ himself, will not make a Christian without the laver of regeneration, much less can any forms of human invention render us acceptable to God. These may be good and useful in their place: and, as it is perverse obstinacy to object to them when they are under proper direction, so it is superstition to make the whole of religion to consist in a punctilious observance of them. A man may strictly perform every religious rite and ceremony, and yet live an immoral life; but can such an one be called a religious man? Can he be said to "worship God in spirit and in truth?" Nay, though he abstain from out-

ward evil, yet this alone is not sufficient; for, not to be vicious does not imply positive virtue, which alone will entitle him to the favour of God. Such indifferent Christians will fall under the same condemnation as that servant who hid his lord's talent in a napkin, and returned it neither encreased nor diminished. Nay, two different men may do the same good works, and though they both conform to the outward ceremonies, yet the one shall be a stranger to all true religion, all devotion of heart. This difference distinguished the Pharisees from the primitive Christians; the former of whom were not only strict observers of the law, but gave alms to the poor, and did many good works; but their motives thereto were not the glory of God and the good of man, but to acquire human praise; whereas the latter were actuated by motives purely pious and benevolent. So that, though true religion naturally leads to every good word and work, yet the real nature of it lies in the heart; it consists in a pure and pious mind.

The heart is the seat of religion. "My son, give me thy heart," says God; for, not only external actions, but even just conceptions of religion, which properly belong to

to the understanding, are not alone sufficient to constitute a man religious : he may form right notions of the Catholic faith, so far as it comes within the sphere of the understanding, and believe those articles of it which exceed human comprehension ; but what is this more than what the devil does ? St. James tells us that the devil believes ; and perhaps, in points of orthodoxy, he is less liable to err than we are, because his intellectual faculties are superior to ours. But it is not merely the work of the head, it is the disposition of the heart, which renders a man either religious or profane. To be religious is not merely to *know* what is right and good, but to *pursue* and love it—it is not only to *discern* what makes for our peace, but to seek and *ensue* it—it is not only to *assent* that God is the greatest and best of beings, but to *honour* and *worship* him as such ; to obey him with pleasure, to love him with all our heart and soul. Our piety must be constant and ardent, superior to every other affection ; so that, to preserve it, we must even be ready to leave father and mother, house and lands ; and God must reign in our hearts without a rival. This is the first and great commandment ; and to comply with it will

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The heart is the seat of religion. "My son, give me thy heart," says God; for, not only external actions, but even just conceptions of religion, which properly belong to

to the understanding, are not alone sufficient to constitute a man religious : he may form right notions of the Catholic faith, so far as it comes within the sphere of the understanding, and believe those articles of it which exceed human comprehension ; but what is this more than what the devil does ? St. James tells us that the devil believes ; and perhaps, in points of orthodoxy, he is less liable to err than we are, because his intellectual faculties are superior to ours. But it is not merely the work of the head, it is the disposition of the heart, which renders a man either religious or profane. To be religious is not merely to *know* what is right and good, but to *pursue* and love it—it is not only to *discern* what makes for our peace, but to seek and *ensue* it—it is not only to *assent* that God is the greatest and best of beings, but to *honour* and *worship* him as such ; to obey him with pleasure, to love him with all our heart and soul. Our piety must be constant and ardent, superior to every other affection ; so that, to preserve it, we must even be ready to leave father and mother, house and lands ; and God must reign in our hearts without a rival. This is the first and great commandment ; and to comply with it will

which is obtained by righteousness, and the latter by faith in Christ. But the righteousness of which we are capable, though it will preserve the mind from the sharp remorse of guilt, yet, because it is not absolutely perfect, it will not quiet the mind from all apprehensions of future punishment. It affords hope, but not that assurance of mercy, which is necessary to set the mind at ease and give it peace. This could be effected by Jesus Christ only, who, as he offered himself a sacrifice for our sins, gives us confidence towards God. Those sins which separated us from God, are expiated by the blood of his Son. The apprehension and dread of an angry judge no longer terrifies us, but the Almighty appears under the mild aspect of a reconciled Father, whose love to us stands confessed by men and angels.—This is peace, inestimable peace. What can materially affect his happiness, who is acquainted of the reconciliation made between God and man, by Jesus Christ, the divine and ever blessed Mediator? Nothing; if he have that righteousness and that faith which is required of him. For, as righteousness and faith qualify him for a participation of this infinite blessing, so faith affords him the assurance of it—banishes from
his

his mind all doubt, all painful uncertainty, all tormenting fear, the fear of God's wrath, and consequently the dread of death.

The certainty of Christ's being the Redeemer of mankind, and the consciousness of having complied with the terms of salvation which he offers, must fill the mind with satisfaction, and impart a pure and lasting peace. But this peace may be and is confirmed to good and pious men by Almighty God, whose Spirit, by his secret but effectual influence, beareth witness with their spirit that they are the children of God;—beareth witness in a manner not to be described, because it passeth all understanding, all merely rational conception: for though, as spirit is not an object of sense, we know so little of it's nature, that we cannot tell how it may be acted upon; yet when our spirits are acted upon, we are sensible of the effects. But if any should doubt of the operation of God's Spirit upon our minds, let them only consider the difference which at the hour of death is generally seen between a good Christian and one who denies our Saviour, but yet boasts of a good moral life.

The Christian quits this life, not perhaps with less pain of body, but with a superior
firmness

firmness of mind, with an internal consolation, with an assurance of heaven, that renders him triumphant in death. It is indeed an awful period, when he is going to launch into the presence of his great Judge, and therefore he requires other support than his imperfect virtue, or than Christianity itself, if it were visionary, could impart to make him prefer death to life. But this he does; yet not from any enthusiastical expectations, which cannot take place in a man of sound sense, but from divine consolations, which eminently supporting him in this hour of difficulty, suffer him not for any pains of death to fall from hope in Christ, but reward his faith by a foretaste of heaven.

Whereas the other is so perplexed between hope and fear, that he would willingly exchange all his future expectations for annihilation, which, though it be void of all *probability*, yet the *possibility* of it is often the chief consolation of such men; sad proof of the difference between a good Christian and those who deny the Lord that bought them!

The peace of God is ever attended with joy in the Holy Ghost. We see here are three things mentioned by the apostle, in which the kingdom of God consists: first, righteous-

righteousness ; secondly, peace, or the reconciliation through Christ between God and us, applied to our minds ; thirdly, joy in the Holy Ghost, which renews our spirits, and enables us to apply to ourselves the redemption by Christ. It is by the Holy Ghost that we are led to every good word and work ; and it is by complying with it's motions that we grow in grace, and receive more and more of it's assistance ; for to him that hath shall be given. And then it is, when our progress in grace has been eminent, that we are particularly sensible of the power of the Holy Spirit, as distinguished from its ordinary operations : then the Christian soul is inspired with a solid joy, a joy which no troubles of this life can diminish, but which, by remaining under the severest trials of affliction, manifests its heavenly birth, and eternal duration ; and which, as it leads to greater perfection, is ever increasing itself. But as this joy in the Holy Ghost cannot precede the peace of God, but is founded upon it, so neither can the peace of God be acquired without righteousness. The perfection of true religion consists in the union of these three. If then, my brethren, we would be happy, let us endeavour by righteousness to qualify ourselves for the
peace

peace of God, that we may be blessed with joy in the Holy Ghost.

To whom, with the Father and Son, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

by which we are led to every good word and work, and made by communicating with it's motions that we grow in grace, and receive more and more of it's assistance; for to him that hath been given a seed, then it is, when our progress in grace has been constant, that we are particularly sensible of the power of the Holy Spirit, as distinguished from it's ordinary operations: then the Christian that is inspired with a solid joy, a joy which no troubles of this life can diminish, but which by remaining under the severest trials of affliction, trials that his heavenly Father will esteem donations; and which, as it tends to greater perfection, is even increasing itself. But as this joy is the Holy Ghost cannot precede the peace of God, but is founded upon it, so neither can the peace of God be acquired without righteousness. The perfection of true religion consists in the union of these three. If then, my dear friends, we would be happy, let us endeavour by righteousness to qualify ourselves for the

SERMON

S E R M O N II.

ON THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED.

Pſalm lxxiii. 12.

LO, THESE ARE THE UNGODLY, THESE PROSPER IN THE WORLD, AND THESE HAVE RICHES IN POSSESSION: AND I SAID, THEN HAVE I CLEANSED MY HEART IN VAIN, AND WASHED MY HANDS IN INNOCENCY.

HOW frequent is the voice of complaint! Discontent and disappointment seem not only to be annexed to worldly pursuits, but sometimes to mix themselves even with devotion. Discontent, when it proceeds from disappointment, cannot indeed be wholly suppressed, but yet it may be greatly lessened by a patient submission to what we cannot avoid.

Disappointment, however, is often the effect of premature and over sanguine expectations. Men are too apt to imagine, that from the possession of such and such things, they would enjoy full satisfaction. Yet when they are possessed of them, they still complain, and lament the want of that complete satisfaction for which they fondly hoped. This disappointment originates in their
having

having formed larger expectations from those things than the nature of them, had it been duly examined, would have justified.

That worldly men, who seek their happiness in sensual gratifications, should be thus disappointed, is neither a subject of wonder nor regret. But we cannot but lament that virtuous and religious men should ever complain that they have cleansed their heart in vain. This complaint, however, proceeds from a very natural, but yet superficial notion of God's providence. How natural is it to suppose that the Almighty, as a Governor of moral rectitude, should distinguish the righteous by his choicest favours, and inflict on the wicked evident marks of his displeasure. This, at first view, seems to be right, and therefore is hastily assumed as the plan which Providence ought to adopt. But alas! when experience convinces us that the contrary frequently happens, "when the ungodly are seen to prosper in the world, and have riches in possession;" then follows disappointment, succeeded by discontent, and the virtuous man exclaims, "Then have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency." The prosperity of the wicked, we see, is no new objection against

against the providence of God. It is an objection that almost shook the faith even of holy David, and had like to have turned him from the paths of virtue. "My feet," says he, "were almost gone, and my treadings had well nigh slipped. And why? I was grieved at the wicked. I do also see the ungodly in such prosperity." But this notion, viz. that God should always favour the righteous, and punish the wicked in this life, though natural and common, is yet superficial. Were the righteous man always prosperous; were he to enjoy health, riches, honours, power,—were he successful in all his undertakings, and happy in all his connections, in proportion to his virtue; and on the contrary, were poverty, disgrace, and every temporal evil sure to overwhelm the sinner;—then no man could acquire any virtuous merit; for where there is no temptation to do wrong, there can be no merit in doing right. And therefore, if certain and present rewards were to allure men to their duty, and inevitable and immediate destruction to deter them from disobedience,—what virtue would there be in abstaining from the latter, and discharging the former? The very nature of virtue will not admit of such a distinction be-

tween the good and bad. It needs not much observation to discern how the heart of man is captivated with temporal prosperity. It is the hope of acquiring this, that often seduces him into vicious courses: and if this prosperity were to become the immediate reward of virtue, the motive for following her would, with the greater part of mankind, be precisely the same as that which now frequently makes them decline her: and were men ever so well inclined, yet they could give no evidence of it, if other and sufficient motives beside the love of rectitude appeared as the cause of that virtue. Moreover, when such advantages were found to attend a righteous life, their virtue of heart might become corrupted, and what they at first did from pure and disinterested principles, they might at last adhere to from the view of reward only. A prosperous life is not the theatre for virtue: it affords her few opportunities of displaying herself. And if temporal success be held forth as the reward of a virtuous life, then does the reward consist in that very thing, the contempt of which, when it interferes with our duty, constitutes virtue. This surely is both an inadequate and improper reward for virtue; and if it were, a certain consequence would corrupt

rupt the best principles of the heart, and annihilate virtue. It is in the school of affliction and distress that eminent virtue is acquired; it is there she exerts herself, and appears to the most advantage; and it is there we most admire her, when shewn by others, however unwilling we ourselves may be to exhibit her in the same manner. When we see a man maintain his integrity amidst the strongest temptations to depart from it;—when we behold him submit to the most abject poverty, rather than swerve from the eternal laws of moral rectitude; and refrain from taking what is not his own, though it be in his power to do it without fear of detection;—when we see him resolutely expose himself to the resentment of his superiors, rather than be guilty of dishonourable practices;—when we see him stedfastly resist every temptation, however strong, and voluntarily submit to contempt, injury, and persecution, rather than wound a good conscience;—how do we admire that man, and praise him for those virtues, for his integrity, fortitude, patience, and resignation, which had never been known either by us or by himself, if he had always been prosperous in the world. It is the fiery trial of affliction that affords an opportunity

of distinguishing, in an exemplary manner, a conscientious attachment to moral rectitude, in those instances at least where there are strong temptations to depart from what is right. But not only moral rectitude, but piety to God is proved and improved by such trials : and were temporal advantages always the lot of the pious, devotion itself would appear to proceed rather from a selfish than a grateful principle. Even holy Job, so remarkable for the sanctity and piety of his manners, would not have been free from this suspicion, had he not, under the greatest affliction, held fast his integrity. Satan imagined that his piety and virtue, which God commended, were founded in interested views. " Doth Job serve God for nought ? Put forth " thine hand, and touch all that he hath, " and he will curse thee to thy face." But when he was encompassed with afflictions, he held fast his integrity, and thereby shewed that his piety stood upon it's own foundation, without any support from temporal views. His friends, however, accused him of hypocrisy, who supposed that prosperity was the consequence of real virtue and godliness. But the Almighty justified him, and in his example shewed that virtue and piety do not proceed

ceed from lucrative motives, and that worldly success is not to be expected as the certain reward of a good life.

Again, Were men always to enjoy this world's goods in proportion to their morality and devotion, many opportunities of practising the noblest virtues would be lost: for when we should see any one in distress, instead of pitying and relieving him, we should, like Job's miserable comforters, condemn him as a foolish wretch, and only exhort him to repent, that he might be more prosperous. There would be no opportunity of being charitable, since the misfortunes of every one could only result from their wickedness, and might be removed by their repentance. And how could we practise the divine virtue of forgiving injuries, nay, of praying for our enemies, and doing good to them, since on the one hand we should, by the privilege of virtue, be exempted from suffering by the malicious attacks of the wicked; and on the other, none would dare to assault us, knowing that the only consequence would be their own immediate destruction? How could we practise patience and submission, when we should be under no afflictions? In short, how could we cultivate any of those great and glo-

rious virtues, which require not only a general rectitude of heart, but an unshaken fortitude, and are not to be acquired but by a continual struggle with some of the strongest passions? How could we do this, when every opportunity of practising and improving in these virtues, would be excluded by our prosperity? Let us only suppose that those men, whose history scripture hath left upon record, as affording illustrious examples of virtue and piety, triumphing in sufferings, (I mean the apostles,) had lived always a *happy* life, had been *rich, great, and powerful*; would not their merit have been much less conspicuous, nay, and much less in reality than it now is? How many passions, for want of being excited, would have remained unencountered, which now they have so gloriously subdued? How many exertions of virtue would never have been made, which now ennoble and dignify their character? Their resignation to the will of Providence, their equanimity, their fortitude, their courage, their patience, their perseverance, their religious zeal, would never have been known, had they not been tried by poverty, distress, injuries, false friends, and professed enemies, perils, reproach, and persecutions; nay, in all probability,

bility, they never would have possessed the patient virtues, for these are only to be acquired by degrees and practice; hence our Lord gradually trained them up, for the discharge of such severe duties, as they never would have submitted to had they been suddenly called to them. It is no very difficult matter to continue in the path of our duty, when the way is strewed with flowers; but when it is thick beset with thorns, then to persevere, this is virtue.—But how many have stopped short in this road, who before the trial imagined their perseverance would surmount every difficulty!

But though in the nature of things temporal prosperity cannot be proposed to individuals as the sure reward of their virtue and piety, yet the Almighty does not absolutely exclude the righteous from their share of the good things of this life. Good men are sometimes prosperous, as well as bad men; but this prosperity depends not upon their rectitude of heart, but upon their prudence, or casual circumstances. Good men may become rich, but then not so frequently as bad men, because the latter often acquire wealth by those very means which the former cannot be guilty of. God hath not indeed excluded the

righteous from the enjoyment of this world, but he does not promise them more than food and raiment, with which he requires them to be content. This being the case, the objection which lies against making temporal prosperity the sure consequence of a virtuous life, cannot be applied to a prosperous good man; for however successful he be at present, he knows that a change in his affairs may happen, and himself be reduced to the greatest distress; therefore he is obliged to consider himself as subject to adversity, and to form his mind to bear misfortunes, that he may be ready to practise the severe virtues of self-denial whenever his circumstances require it. But then, it may be asked, Does the Divine Being make no difference between bad and good men? Yes, there is a difference made between them; chiefly, however, with respect to their internal state, and future expectations; yet even with regard to this world, though the wicked often prosper by their wickedness, yet it frequently works their destruction: so that they do not for a certainty reap that benefit from their sins which they propose to themselves: they are often entrapped in their own wickedness, and fall into the snare which they had dug for others.

The

The justice of God overtakes them at last. But if we suppose that the distinction between the wicked and the virtuous ought to consist in constant adversity to the former, and universal prosperity to the latter, then is our opinion founded on very superficial notions, and contrary to the evident plan of Providence. And, were it to be so, there would be no possibility of a man's enjoying that pure satisfaction which the consciousness of having preserved his integrity, amidst the greatest trials and distress, cannot fail to impart. But this satisfaction is lasting, and far superior to the pleasures of sense.

To adopt the notion that the honour and justice of God is concerned to render the virtuous and pious successful in this life, may prove fatal to us, and drive us to immorality and infidelity. This had like to have been the case with David: but he at last acknowledges his error, and confesses his ignorance.

“ I was grieved at the wicked: I do also
 “ see the ungodly in such prosperity; for they
 “ come in no peril of death, but are lusty and
 “ strong. They come in no misfortune like
 “ other folk; neither are they plagued like
 “ other men. And this is the cause why they
 “ are so holden with pride and overwhelmed
 with

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“ with cruelty. Their eyes swell with fatness,
 “ and they do even what they list. They cor-
 “ rupt one another, and speak of wicked
 “ blasphemy: their talking is against the
 “ Most High. Tush, say they, how should
 “ God perceive; is there knowledge in the
 “ Most High? Lo, these are the ungodly,
 “ these prosper in the world, and they have
 “ riches in possession: and I said, then have I
 “ cleansed my heart in vain, and washed mine
 “ hands in innocency. All the day long have
 “ I been punished, and chastened every morn-
 “ ing. Yea, and I had almost said even as
 “ they, (namely, that there is no knowledge
 “ in the Most High,) but lo, then should I
 “ have condemned the generation of thy chil-
 “ dren. Then thought I to understand this.
 “ But it was too hard for me, until I went
 “ into the sanctuary of God; then understood
 “ I the end of these men. Namely, how thou
 “ dost set them in slippery places, and castest
 “ them down and destroyest them. Thus
 “ my heart was grieved, and it went even
 “ through my reins, so foolish was I, and ig-
 “ norant, even as it were a beast before thee.”

The temporal advantages of the wicked are
 neither certain nor stable: and, even in their
 most prosperous days, their pleasures are more
 specious

specious than solid. Their vices tinge all their pleasures with a mixture of pain; for it is impossible for a rational creature to indulge himself in the licentious gratification of his lusts and appetites, and for ever escape the censure of his own conscience. Besides, his tumultuous passions banish peace and contentment from his breast; whilst the opposite natures of some of them will not allow him to gratify all: and, therefore, though he be very unwilling to leave any ungratified, yet he finds it necessary to sacrifice some to the indulgence of others. Ambition and the love of ease interfere with each other: pride with interest; covetousness with vanity; and sensual gratification with health of body. The pleasures of vice are more gaudy than real. But, when these fail, how miserable is the state of the sinner! He has nothing left to console him. The tortures of remorse, combined with misfortunes, make him both repine at his existence in this life, and dread the approach of death. Even in his most prosperous days, the turbid pleasures of sin are far excelled by those of a clear conscience, which the virtuous enjoy. Though the world frown upon the good man, yet it is not in vain that he hath cleansed his heart; for, though success be
not

not the *certain* lot of either the good or bad, yet the good man hath this remarkable advantage, that as he can enjoy prosperity undisturbed by remorse of conscience, so, in adversity, he can relieve his mind with the balm that religion infuses; whereas the bad man has no resource left to blunt the edge of misfortunes. The internal peace which virtue and religion afford, vastly outweighs any external advantages which vice can yield. "It is (as a late author observes) the peculiar effect of virtue to make a man's chief happiness arise from himself, and his own conduct. Success in worldly affairs, is with him but a secondary object. To discharge his own part with integrity and honor is his chief aim. If he has done properly what he has to do his mind is at rest, to Providence he leaves the event;"—"his witness is in heaven, and his record is on high."—"Satisfied with the approbation of God, and the testimony of a good conscience, he enjoys himself, and despises the triumph of guilt."

But, last of all, the righteous man is prepared not only to meet death with fortitude, the great terror and dread of the wicked, but even to wait for it with a joyful hope. His expectation

expectation of a blessed exchange of time for eternity is built on a sure foundation. Such assurances does his own reason, his conscience, and divine revelation afford him of future happiness, that he regards the hour of his dissolution as the period when every sorrow shall end, and eternal joys begin; when he shall be received into those mansions which his Redeemer has prepared for him.

Cease then to think that you have cleansed your heart in vain, though you behold the wicked adorned with robes of earthly splendor, whilst you are covered with the humble mantle of poverty. Beneath their pomp discontent and terror lurk, and true felicity is unknown. Look not for the reward of thy virtue and godliness in those things which are beneath it, but look for it within you, in your own mind, and you shall be satisfied. If you do not do this, if you still repine because you share not the external prosperity of the wicked; if discontent lodge within you, know assuredly that you have not sufficiently cleansed your heart. Your virtue was specious, and not real; your devotion was pride in disguise; your piety was interested, and not the generous effusions of a grateful mind: nor will you ever attain to real purity of heart, till you go
into

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into the sanctuary of God, till you resign the world as a primary object, and place your happiness in those intellectual pleasures which spring from the union of morality and devotion. Then, shall the ways of Providence no longer appear to you too hard to be understood. You shall cheerfully acquiesce in the divine dispensations, and seek no other reward than what your own heart yields you.

SERMON

S E R M O N III.

THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE TO THE
RIGHTEOUS, NO DEMERIT OF THEIR
OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL.

I Cor. xv. 58.

ALWAYS ABOUNDING IN THE WORK OF THE LORD;
FORASMUCH AS YE KNOW THAT YOUR LABOUR IS
NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.

IT has often been objected to Christianity, that the motives held out to induce men to profess and practise it, are of a selfish nature, are addressed to the passions; that the prospect of eternal rewards is made the grand reason why men should believe and obey the gospel: whereas its doctrines, if true, should be believed, and its precepts, if right, should be obeyed, without any other view than that of acting as becomes reasonable beings; for that reason should induce, and not *rewards bribe* them to discharge their duty, since to act from principles of reason is great, honorable, and worthy of a rational being; but to be influenced by rewards, is mean, servile, and unmeritorious.

That

That this argument, which seems to strike at the merit of faith and good works in a Christian, from a regard to his soul's welfare, is more superficial than solid, is what I intend to shew in the following discourse.

1st. As to faith.—The doctrines of the gospel, it is said, should, if true, be believed, without any other view than that of acting as becomes reasonable beings. But how is it to be known that they are true? If they be demonstrably true, they can no longer be believed; but are known; faith is then done away by knowledge. But if the truth of them cannot be demonstrated, mankind can only *believe* them: and this belief, to be rational, must be founded upon some good testimony, that has been seriously and attentively examined, and fully approved. But such an examination requires time and trouble, and therefore will not be undertaken by any wise man, unless the *belief* of what is offered to him as articles of faith, be proposed to him as a matter of the highest consequence. The testimony of God is indeed sure, but then the same diligence in our enquiries is requisite to discover whether there be good reason to believe, that what is advanced as divine revelation be such or not. And this diligent

ligent investigation would never be made, unless the proposed revelation appeared important. For should any one advance, as a revelation from God, something which no way concerned us, whether true or false, should we trouble ourselves at all about it? There would be no motives to induce us to examine whether it were a true revelation or not; nor should we concern ourselves about it, nor could it be seriously required of us; for to ask any one to labour for no end, is an unreasonable requisition, which none but a fool would make, and none but a fool comply with.

To render, therefore, our enquiries into revelation reasonable, some advantage must be proposed from our belief of it: an advantage sufficient to induce us to examine whether what is offered to us as matter of faith be really divine revelation. Thus, as belief of the gospel is the result of a diligent enquiry into and examination of its evidences, and, as the labour requisite for this enquiry and examination, cannot reasonably be undertaken, but with a view to some beneficial end; (for who in his senses would labour to no end?) therefore, the prospect of future rewards to the believer, by no means dimi-

nishes, but is absolutely necessary to establish his merit; since, without such a prospect, his faith must appear fruitless, and the labour requisite to acquire that faith, must be absurd and vain.

II. It is objected, as to practical Christianity, that if the duties which it enjoins, be such as becomes a rational creature, then he ought to perform them merely from a sense of their rectitude, and not from the mercenary motives of reward.—To this I answer that we must consider what it is that renders those duties reasonable; for reason directs us to act for some end, and that for the best.—Now there are some parts of our duty as Christians, which relate only to the next life. “If in this life only,” says St. Paul, “we have hope, we are, of all men, the most miserable.” But surely there can be no merit in a man’s proposing his own misery as the end of his labours. This would be folly. How then could a man, with any shew of reason, voluntarily submit to persecutions and contempt, to hunger and thirst, to cold and nakedness, to imprisonments and death, without some view of acquiring a recompence for all his sufferings? But if a great good be proposed to him as the end thereof, then his

conduct

conduct, which, without such a view, would have been absurd, becomes reasonable, and consequently his merit is not diminished.

But it is still further objected, that those great labours and sufferings which were the portion of the first Christians, do not extend to all; and, therefore, those motives which were necessary to render their submitting to them reasonable, cannot well be applied to the rest of mankind: for that practical Christianity being, for the most part, obviously right and advantageous, even in this world, the proposal of future rewards seems partly unnecessary, and partly diminishes the merit of acting agreeably to it.

Answer. If, indeed, no more were required of us than our approbation, the holding out of future rewards, as an *inducement* for us to *approve* of practical Christianity, would be unnecessary; for the mind of man cannot but approve what it perceives to be right. But since the actual *practice* of it be enjoined, in which the concurrence of the *will* is requisite, we must consider whether the obvious rectitude and *temporal* advantages of a virtuous and holy life, be, of themselves, sufficient or effectual motives for the conduct of mankind.—If we appeal to experience, they

are not. Nay, even the promise of eternal bliss, does not have such a general and effectual influence as could be wished. The causes, then, of this insufficiency must be enquired into. Man has various passions, and it often happens that many of them cannot be gratified but at the expence of his reason, by his departing from what he knows to be right. These passions, when inflamed by present objects, are violent, and prevail over the monitions of reason; the rectitude and future utility of restraining them is forgotten, or but faintly remembered amidst their violent solicitations. The prospect of present enjoyment over-powers every other consideration, and temptation prevails. Hence it becomes necessary to oppose the force of one passion to the prevalence of another, and to excite the hopes and fears of mankind, by the prospect of future rewards, that thus, by producing an equilibrium, over-powered reason may be restored to her empire and govern the will. The *utility*, therefore, of encreasing the number of, and giving weight to the motives for a right conduct in mankind, is plain, both from reason and experience. Again, let us consider the strong impressions made by sensible objects, which may be enjoyed by deviating

ating from the strict rules of virtue and religion. If the effects of our conduct were to terminate in this life, what sufficient motives can be alledged to restrain mens passions so strictly as Christianity enjoins? for even reason directs every man so to act, as appears, upon the whole, to be most conducive to his happiness; "to eat and drink to-day, if to-morrow they die." Accordingly, the Epicureans and Sadducees, who held the mortality of the soul, made pleasure and luxury their constant aim. And this ever must be the case, where men do not act under the influence of future views: for our conduct will ever be determined by our will; and, where this is captivated by sensible objects, it often warps the understanding so much, even in those who do not deny future rewards and punishments, that they act contrary to what religion prescribes. What then must it do in them who deny the future existence of the soul? The rich man in the gospel, who was cloathed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, who received his good things in this life, cannot be blamed for having enjoyed them in their utmost extent, if his existence were to have terminated in this world. And if, upon his principles, his

understanding did not disapprove of luxurious enjoyments, how can it be supposed that he could have resisted the solicitations of his senses, and have denied himself the gratification of them?

There are many things forbidden by religion which may be safely done, and many things commanded which may be safely neglected, without any detriment to our temporal welfare; and, therefore, nothing but a view to our future happiness can determine us to abstain from the former, and perform the latter. For as the views of mankind are different, so will their conduct be different, according as they act with a view to time or eternity. A man may act very wisely with regard to this world only, whose conduct would be very foolish with regard to the next. And, that a sense of moral rectitude and general utility, are not effective motives for human conduct, all the vices of mankind testify. Passion and self-interest will prevail, and what every one judges (no matter whence he forms his judgment) most conducive to his happiness, that will he do. How much less ineffectual, then, must such motives be to inspire men with resolution to live in that holy manner which Christianity enjoins?

Hence

Hence it appears evident, that great future advantages, that eternal advantages, must be proposed to mankind, ere they will be persuaded to live in such a manner as shall render them worthy of everlasting life. A reward must appear to be the consequence of their labour in the Lord.

But it is further objected, that though it be necessary to propose to mankind some reward to induce them to obey the gospel, yet, ought not the consciousness of their own rectitude and merit, which naturally arises from doing what is right, to be deemed sufficient, and the most proper reward?

To this the answer is plain. It ought not to be deemed sufficient, because, for the reasons before alledged, it is not sufficient; nor, if it were, is it the most proper, since, as we shall shew, the moral merit of man will not be diminished when he obeys from the more powerful motive of future felicity.

It must indeed be confessed that the mind of man approves what it perceives to be right, and is conscious of its own rectitude in that approbation. But then man cannot so easily *perform* his duty as he can approve it. If the human mind were like the divine, and whatever it approved and willed, were the

immediate effects of its approbation and volition, without any further trouble, then, indeed, the simple consciousness of his own merit in approving and willing (which, in this case, would be synonymous terms) what is right would be a sufficient and the most proper reward. But it is not so. A man is exposed to toil and labour, and often to much suffering, in the discharge of his duty; and, therefore, without some prospect of future good to make him effectually *will* what he approves, he would remain in a quiescent state of approbation only, and never be induced to perform irksome duties. Upon which account, the recompense of reward proposed to the righteous, is suited to the various nature of man, as a sufficient and proper inducement to excite him to the discharge of his duty. Man is composed of body, soul, and spirit. In the discharge of his duty he must deny himself many sensual gratifications, and is exposed to various sufferings in his body, which, therefore, is to be raised from the dead, and rendered capable of perpetual duration:—In his soul he has the conflict of opposite passions to sustain, some he must subdue within moderate bounds, as the love of honour, fame, power, &c. the gratification
of

of many he must entirely renounce, and, if possible, put away the passions themselves, as revenge, malice, wrath, envy, &c. His soul, therefore, will be rewarded with such delicious pleasures, such rich enjoyments, as eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive them. His spirit, the intellectual part of him, which must be here improved by the study, and enriched with the knowledge of what is most essential to be known, will be rewarded by an increase of knowledge; "for then he shall no longer see as through a glass, darkly, but face to face: he shall no longer know in part, but shall know even also as he is known." Thus no part of man will be unrewarded for what he may have undergone in the discharge of his duty.

Now, upon this view of the consequences of a religious life, there are sufficient motives for perseverance in it; and they are the most proper, for a man may be said to have acted wisely, whatever perils and sufferings he may have undergone, whatever pleasures he may have denied himself, with a sure view to his everlasting welfare. But without some such view, where would be the reasonableness of suffering and self-denial? it certainly could not

not be so great, and all those parts of our conduct which have respect to our eternal welfare only, would be folly. But, then, if the prospect of future felicity render any part of our conduct reasonable, which, otherwise would not be so, it must render it meritorious; for merit does not consist in suffering and acting for no end, but in acting prudently for the best end. Now, the only end we can have in view by being religious, must be our own good; for we cannot benefit God by it, nor injure him by the neglect of it. Even the understanding could not acquiesce in the burthening of ourselves with duties which it perceives to be unnecessary, much less could the will; which, however, would be the case, if religion, in its present extent, were imposed upon us, without any view to the next life: the prospect, therefore, of eternal bliss, which the gospel affords those who obey it, by no means diminishes the merit of their obedience.

Again; Christianity must be considered as training us for the next life, and preparing us to join the holy assembly where God is all to all; and, to this end, requires the suppression of those passions which would prevent our improvement in every religious grace and
virtue;

virtue; such as a firm faith in the wisdom, justice, and benevolence of God, joined with gratitude and love to him for his goodness to us. But now, if we reject the consideration of that future state of bliss, which God hath promised to those who love and obey him, it will be impossible for us to grow in those graces: for the wisdom, justice, and benevolence of God cannot appear so conspicuous to us from supposing this life the whole of our existence, as from considering it only as preparatory to the next. Where is the wisdom of making us to endure for a little while, and then to be no more? Where is the justice of permitting the wicked to prosper, whilst the righteous are often unsuccessful? Where is the benevolence in creating us obnoxious to pain and misery? are questions which, if this life be our whole, will stagger all faith in those attributes of the Deity.—But, let heaven open to our view, and the prospect clears, all doubts subside, and we admire that wisdom which makes this probationary life an introduction to a better. We reverence that justice which, whilst it is long suffering to the wicked, prepares ample rewards for the labours of the good. We adore that benevolence which provides eternal

nal happiness for those who, by patiently continuing in well doing, by humble resignation to the divine dispensations, by virtue and holiness, qualify themselves for the purity of heaven. The heart glows with gratitude for such a being, and the fervour of devotion being added to faith, preserves our obedience. The motive, therefore, which the apostle alleges in the text, why we should abound in the work of the Lord, is not only consistent with virtue and piety, but is necessary to render them flourishing and vigorous; and by giving us more exalted notions of the Deity, and encreasing our love and reverence for him, improves both our hearts and minds, and fixes our obedience on the most rational foundation; and, therefore, does not diminish, but rather increase the merit of it. And we find that all good men, even among the heathens, believed that the virtuous would be hereafter rewarded; urging the *probability* of it as a grand reason why men should be virtuous, and deeming those most worthy of eternal happiness who acted with a view to obtain it. The *assurance*, therefore, of what was only probable to them, must be a greater and better reason to us; and there can be no demerit in acting from great and good reasons.

sons. And may that assurance have its proper effect on us, may it induce us to strive earnestly to grow in grace, and always abound in the work of the Lord, promoting, by instruction and example, the belief and practice of *that* gospel which, whilst it enjoins the purest virtues and holiest duties, encourages our obedience to them by the strongest motives, affording the brightest and surest prospect of future bliss.

Having now answered the objections which I proposed to do, I have only one observation to add, namely, that since an authentic promise of eternal bliss is made to those who obey the gospel, and future punishment threatened to them who disobey it, the *folly* of disobedience becomes greater in proportion to the certainty which we now enjoy of future and just retribution. The light of the gospel aggravates the guilt of sin; and, therefore, it behoves all men to take heed to their ways, and not to let this world so engage them as to make them neglectful of their everlasting interest; not to let a few sensual pleasures, more short-lived than themselves, rob them of endless joys: for, whatever men may now think of it, yet the time will assuredly come, even in this life, when all the gaieties and
plea-

pleasures of the world shall fade in their eyes ; when riches, honours, power, and all that seduce the sons of men into sin and folly, shall appear mean and contemptible : for what do all these avail at the hour of death ? The time shall assuredly come, when piety and virtue, when faith and good works, shall be esteemed as what alone are truly valuable : for, what else can their departing souls desire ? What else can give them consolation in that tremendous hour ? What else can they carry with them to recommend them to the favour of their God and Judge ?

And since swift-winged time will soon bring this awful hour to us all, let us be wisely prepared to meet it, by “ always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.”

SERMON

S E R M O N IV.

CHRIST OUR GUIDE.

John xiv. 6.

JESUS SAITH UNTO HIM, I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.

IN these words our Saviour proposes himself to us, as the true teacher and guide to everlasting happiness. But before we consider the text itself, let us consider the occasion on which it was spoken.

As the apostles, though pious and good men, had early imbibed the prejudices of their nation, they considered immortality in this life, and temporal prosperity, as what would distinguish the Messiah. Our Lord, therefore, lest his approaching sufferings and death should shake their faith, and the persecutions with which they might be threatened on his account, disarm their constancy, endeavoured to confirm them in both, by foretelling his sufferings; which, as it was a proof that he voluntarily submitted to them, plainly shewed that he could have avoided them if he had chosen

chosen it. To *reconcile* his disciples to the thought of his sufferings and death, and even to submit to the same themselves, he explained their tendency and end. "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." Be not troubled at the persecutions that will soon overtake me, and threaten you; think not that you have been deceived in accounting me the Messiah: ye believe in God; that he is infinitely wise, and therefore cannot be deceived;—that he is infinitely holy, and, therefore, will not deceive;—that he is infinitely powerful, and, therefore, can execute his will;—that he is infinitely benevolent, and, therefore, wills the good of his faithful servants. Ye believe and confide thus in God, and, therefore, believe also and confide in me, that I know what is best for you, that I am able and willing to give it you; that whatever evils you are exposed to, I can protect you from, and will do it as far as I see fit; that, for whatever sufferings you undergo on my account, I can, and will, plentifully reward you, for, in my Father's house are many mansions.—As in the palaces of kings there are many apartments, suited to the station and dignity of different

different persons, so, in heaven, there are various degrees of bliss, according to the faith and holiness of men.—If it were not so, I would have told you, and not have exposed you to needless sufferings on my account; for I, whom you have seen raise the dead to life, and who have proved my divine mission, must certainly know all that relates to the soul hereafter: therefore, be not troubled when you see me die; think not that your hopes are blasted, for I go to prepare a place for you; I die to open heaven to you. “And if I go and prepare
“ a place for you, I will come again and re-
“ ceive you unto myself, that where I am ye
“ may be also.”—This will Christ do at the end of the world, when he comes in his Father’s glory.—“And whither I go ye know,
“ and the way ye know. Thomas saith un-
“ to him, We know not *whither* thou goest,
“ and how can we know the *way*?” Thomas seems still to have considered the Messiah’s Kingdom as a temporal kingdom, and his house an earthly palace. “Jesus saith unto
“ him, I am the way, and the truth, and the
“ life.” Faith in me, and obedience to my commands, will lead to my Father’s house, and are the only true roads to the mansions

of felicity.—“If ye had known me, ye should
 “have known my Father also:” if ye had
 known my doctrine fully, and obeyed my
 precepts, ye should have known the per-
 fections and counsels of my Father. And
 henceforth ye know him and have seen him.
 Philip saith unto him, “Lord, shew us the
 “Father, and it sufficeth.” Whether Philip
 still conceived of Jesus as a temporal prince,
 and his Father as an earthly potentate, or
 whether he wished to be favoured with a
 sight of that glorious light symbolical of the
 divine presence, with which Moses was fa-
 voured, cannot well be determined; he could
 not desire to see the divine essence, which is
 invisible. “Jesus saith unto him, Have I
 “been so long with you, and yet hast thou
 “not known me, Philip? He that hath seen
 “me hath seen the Father;” for I am the
 image of the invisible God. “Believest thou
 “not that I am in the Father, and the Fa-
 “ther in me? The words that I speak unto
 “you, I speak not of myself, but the Father
 “that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works;”
i. e. the wonderful works that I do are ma-
 nifestly performed by the power of God,
 who is my Father, and dwelleth in me,
 and consequently the words that I speak
 flow

flow from the same source, from the Father also. "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for my work's sake."

As we are taught to imitate God, who is all perfect, (in his imitable perfections) to obey his commands, and submit to his dispensations, as what not only best becomes, but will be most beneficial to us, by improving our nature, and qualifying us for a more enlarged and exalted sphere of happiness:—so have we the example of the Son of God set before us, whose life was as perfect as his nature, spotless and blameless: an example that teaches infinitely better than abstract reasoning, even though it were what it seldom is, unmixed with error: an example calculated for the human race, for when he assumed our nature, he not only died to purchase redemption for mankind, but lived as men ought to live, that by imitating him, they might obtain salvation also.

'Tis true we no longer enjoy his presence on earth: but when he ascended into heaven, he left his gospel behind him; and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, he brought to remembrance in the minds of the apostles all things that he did or spake; they have transmitted

to posterity his words and works, which, like all other holy scriptures, are written for our instruction : these then we should study, that we might learn to follow Him who is the way, the truth and the life. Christ is the way to God and happiness, for he came from God and went to God ; he is the true way, for he alone could declare to mankind what they must do to be saved : he is the life, for he purchased for mankind that happiness which he *taught* them how to secure.

Let us, then, consider Christ in the character of a teacher and guide.

By the wondrous works which our Lord performed, he gave ample testimony that what he taught was true ; for it will follow of course, that he who exerted a divine power to confirm the truth of his doctrines, must, in those doctrines, have declared the will of God ; that he who raised the dead to life, will, because he hath said it, raise all mankind at the last day, and bestow immortal life or eternal blessedness on those who believe in and obey him ; that he who knew what was in man, will, for the same reason, be appointed Judge of quick and dead.

First, then, as a teacher he confirmed to mankind, that they would exist in a future state.

Secondly.

Secondly. He informed them of the divine mercy to sinners.

Thirdly. He taught them what they ought to do to obtain it.

The immortality of the soul, and a state of future reward or punishment, had been a constant theme among philosophers; and though they could shew the probability of it, yet as human reasoning is often fallacious, and as they differed in their sentiments concerning what might constitute future happiness, they could neither pronounce with certainty concerning the future existence of man; nor, allowing *that*, could they teach the way to heaven with assurance.—But our Lord, who was competent to determine this matter in all its parts, hath assured us, that not only the soul, but the body also shall exist hereafter; and that *they* shall be rewarded with everlasting happiness, whose improvements in virtue and piety have confirmed them in a temper capable of enjoying pure and spiritual pleasures, and rendered worthy the divine favour.—This he hath taught us ought to be the end we should ever have in view, because, being of an eternal nature, it is infinitely important.—He hath taught us to lay up treasure in heaven, by acquiring the

riches of the Spirit, and not to be *so anxious* about procuring *temporal* wealth, as to neglect our *eternal* interest; for that external riches not belonging properly to a man's self, and the possession of them being transient, they can bear no proportion to those which are internal and everlasting; and that consequently the possession of them can scarce improve, and the want of them never diminish *his* happiness, who is rich towards God: but that anxiety about them is equally foolish and impious; *foolish*, as they are not worth it; *impious*, as it is distrusting God's wisdom and goodness. "Take, therefore," says he, "no thought for the morrow, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, or wherewithal ye shall be clothed; for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things; but seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things shall be added unto you." And as he thus preached a contempt of temporal in comparison of eternal riches, so he thought fit to exemplify it in his practice, for the encouragement of those who are poor and needy; for though he was the Lord of all, and could have commanded the whole world, yet did he submit to the most abject want. "The foxes have holes, and
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“the birds of the air nests, but the Son of Man had not where to lay his head.” Hence we should follow Him, who is the way, the truth, and the life of immortal felicity, and not consider this world as our greatest good, but, looking beyond the present to future and eternal scenes of bliss, aim at that spiritual perfection which is necessary to insure it; for “where our treasure is, there will our heart be also.” To encourage men, conscious as they are that they do not deserve the favour of God; to encourage them to repent, he hath,

Secondly, informed them of the divine mercy to sinners, and *assured* them, that if they believe in and obey him, their sins shall be forgiven them, for that he himself would expiate them with his own blood; that their immortality is certain, for he himself would raise them up at the last day; that their reward is sure, for he himself would be their Judge.

That mercy might be extended to the penitent, he voluntarily shed his own precious blood as an atonement for sin, to answer those wise ends which infinite wisdom has in view, in requiring that where there is guilt, there should be some expiation before pardon be

granted; and to prove that he himself is qualified to be their Judge, and to forgive sins, he manifested a divine knowledge of the heart of man: for perceiving the thoughts of men, he often gave answers before the men themselves had time to speak; as was frequently the case when he combated the opinions of the Scribes and Pharisees.—He told the rich young man who enquired of him what he must do to be saved, that he lacked one thing, that he wanted a charitable heart, a greater love for the poor, and a less love of the world.—“He knew all men,” says St. John, “and needed not that any should testify to him of man, for he knew what was in man.” And when he forgave the sins of the paralytic, he proved that he was commissioned to forgive sins, by miraculously curing him of the palsy: for it necessarily follows, that he who did the one in attestation of his being able to do the other, had power to forgive sins, for both the cure and the pardon must proceed from one and the same power, namely, the power of God.

As our Lord was so well qualified to be a true teacher and a potent Saviour, as he was so competent to instruct mankind in all things that

that belong to their eternal peace, so hath he taught them,

Thirdly, What they ought to do to obtain it.

And, first, our Lord hath taught us to love God with all our heart, and not to devote to the creature our supreme affections, which are due only to the Creator:—That with entire resignation we submit to his will, under the most afflictive circumstances, as to the dispensations of infinite wisdom and goodness. That we study to know, and cheerfully obey, the will of God. That we confide in his providence, and diligently cultivate a spirit of piety and devotion; and, lest the concerns and pleasures of the world should insinuate themselves too much into our affections, he hath commanded us frequently to retire to our closet, and pray to our Father, who seeth in secret. And that the force of his example might give weight to his precepts, he exhibited himself a pattern of his own instructions. When the business of the day was closed, in which he laboured to promote the gracious purposes of his Father, he retired apart into some mountain or private place, and spent whole nights in prayer. He readily submitted to a life of trouble, distress,
and

and sorrow, because such was the will of God; no murmur, no complaint was heard. And when the terrors of a cruel death invaded him, resigned to the divine will, his prayer was, "Father, not my will, but thine be done." With reason, therefore, should we cultivate that spirit of true devotion which he hath taught, and of which he hath given us an example in himself; for what our Redeemer requires us to do, must be necessary to train us for that state of blessedness which he hath purchased: what was his practice ought to be that of his disciples. And, indeed, from imitating and obeying *him* results that peace of mind which is an anticipation of heaven; for when we love God with all our heart, our soul is fixed upon an object that can never fail us. To be resigned to the will of God, to trust in his providence, is to bid adieu to all anxious care and solicitude, to see, with triumph, lasting good arising out of transient evil. To study and obey his will is to improve both the understanding and the heart; it is to acquire true and eternal wisdom; it is to subdue unruly and disquieting passions, and introduce order, serenity, and peace, in their stead. To pray to God is to have communion with the King
of

of kings, with the fountain of wisdom, with the Author of happiness, and fills the soul with present satisfaction, and confidence of future bliss. Thus, by following Christ, we qualify ourselves for, and, in some measure, anticipate the blessedness of heaven.

II. Our Lord hath taught his disciples to cultivate that disposition which is requisite for the proper discharge of social duties, namely, universal benevolence—to love our neighbour as ourselves—to delight in communicating good—and to esteem it “more
“ blessed to give than to receive.” To suppress all sentiments of pride, anger, animosity, and revenge, which are equally destructive of a man’s own peace of mind, and of the welfare of society; and to learn humility, meekness, kindness, and to forgive injuries; dispositions which endear us to mankind, save us from numerous vexations, afford us infinite satisfaction, and recommend us to the favour of *Him* who is good to all. And such was the temper of Jesus, which appeared throughout his whole life; for though he was Lord of all, and the express image of his Father’s person, yet he humbled himself, and took upon him the form of a servant. He delighted not in an ostentatious parade of state,
but

but sought only the substantial merit, the real glory of virtue: and by the poverty to which he submitted; by the resignation with which he bore it, he hath shewn us that *pride was not made for man*. The great contradiction of sinners, which he endured—the patience and mildness which he manifested under all the injuries and insults he received from them, even whilst he was labouring for their salvation, is an example of unparalelled meekness, which reflects the highest lustre upon his goodness of heart. Resentment found no place within him: but when he *groaned in spirit*, it was for the hardness of *their* hearts, whom he had come to save. When his human nature was sinking beneath the cruelty and accumulated afflictions with which his enemies and murderers loaded him, his parting soul, uninfected with any taint of revenge, breathed forth mercy and forgiveness: “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” This disposition of universal love is necessary for *them* to cultivate who would enter into the joys of *that* place, where all is harmony and benevolence; where the insolence of pride, and the turbulence of revenge, never disturb the blessed inhabitants, but peace and friendship, and

and good-will for ever reign. Nay, even now there will result from such a temper that inward and lasting satisfaction, which the consciousness of virtuous improvement and goodness ever bestow. The exercise of this temper is attended with a pure pleasure, and yields a foretaste of that blessedness which we shall enjoy in his presence, who hath given us an example of perfection, and who hath redeemed us, even whilst enemies to him, and through whose amazing love to mankind millions will be happy to all eternity. How must a good man exult at this prospect: how must he admire that disposition which produced it!

Lastly, our Lord hath taught us to reject the pleasures of this world, nay life itself, when they cannot be enjoyed without sacrificing a good conscience, and our duty to God: for the pleasures of devotion he hath shewn to be superior to those of sense; and improvement in virtue and piety to be infinitely more important than the gain of the whole world; because the former are of an eternal duration, and adapted to the nature of the immortal soul; whereas the latter are transitory and unsatisfying. And whilst he taught men to renounce the unlawful pleasures

tures of sense, he did not, like many of the philosophers, indulge in them himself. Whilst he bid his disciples adhere stedfastly to the truth, even under the severest persecutions, he did not himself court popularity by dissimulation and flattery ; but he renounced the favour of the people who would have made him a king ; he opposed their prejudices and vices at the expence of their esteem. He shewed them that he valued nothing in comparison of virtue, piety, and holiness—that his kingdom was the kingdom of righteousness—that his pleasure was to do the will of his Father—that rather than renounce the truth, and his spiritual religion, he chose to undergo the extremity of their malice, and despised the shame of an ignominious death. With reason should we choose him for our guide, who was himself the great example of what he taught, the true way to eternal life.

As a further confirmation of his doctrines, that in him was no error, but all was truth, that he taught the way to heaven, and is the life of them that believe, he rose from the dead, he rose as the first fruits of resurrection, and appeared to his disciples, confirming all that he had before said to them, and then ascended into heaven, where he promised

mitted to bring his faithful followers, and demonstrated his sufficiency to do it, by sending the Holy Ghost to his disciples.

A life so pure and holy—precepts so adapted for the improvement of our nature—doctrines so salutary, and full of hope to fallen man—prospects so bright and cheering—promises confirmed to us by innumerable miracles, stamped with the divine seal of Omnipotence, surely claim our strictest attention, and prove that Jesus is the way to blessedness; that to imitate, obey, and believe in him, is what certainly will, and what alone can, procure us salvation. He hath shewn us how we ought to walk; he hath died for the remission of sins; he hath ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God; *i. e.* is invested with all power and authority, thereby assuring the penitent of pardon, and a gracious reception.

Let us then follow him as our guide: for if we would attain heaven, we must obey him who hath purchased it for us: we must learn to “live soberly, righteously, and godly,
“in this present evil world, looking for the
“blessed hope, and glorious appearance of
“God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who
will

“ will raise us from the dead, and change our
 “ vile bodies, that they may be like unto his
 “ glorious body, according to the mighty
 “ working, whereby he is able to subdue all
 “ things to himself.”

SERMON

S E R M O N V.

THE UNION OF RELIGION AND MORALITY.

Micah vi. 8.

HE HATH SHEWED THEE, O MAN, WHAT IS GOOD FOR THEE : AND WHAT DOETH THE LORD THY GOD REQUIRE OF THEE, BUT TO DO JUSTICE, TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUMBLY WITH THY GOD.

THAT great and wise Being, who hath placed us in this probationary state, hath not involved in obscurity those duties which he requires of us. The great lines of moral and religious duties, as they are agreeable to our nature, as rational creatures, so are they obvious and intelligible to all men. Man is a creature plainly formed, both for society and religion : and as his nature is adapted for these two purposes, so does it, as it were, cement together the duties which belong to each : for the duty which he owes to God, and that which he owes to his neighbour, cannot be divided without destroying both. Some faint traces of the one may indeed remain, after the other is gone ; but such only as serve to shew that the spirit is fled ; for to

consider the duty we owe to God, as unconnected with *that* we owe to man, or the duty we owe to man, as not united with *that* we owe to God, is like separating the soul and body; for we can never rightly discharge the one but in conjunction with the other. This obvious truth is as it were implanted in the hearts of all men, and would flourish with due vigour, were no selfish principles, or vitiated appetites to obstruct it. The rude Indian, whose breast barbarous custom hath steel'd against the feelings of humanity, to all but those of his own tribe, still acknowledges them there: he holds it his duty not to injure, but to protect those who are united to him in the bonds of society. Nature still prevails; and though not improved by culture, yet cannot be wholly extinguished by neglect. And as he feels the influence of social connexions, so is his mind, however uncultivated, susceptible of religious impressions. His notions of the Deity may be erroneous, but still he acknowledges a God, and adores with reverence.

But these natural impulses of the human heart may be greatly diminished, and almost suppressed. In polished states, where the improvements in arts and sciences have rendered

dered men more dependent on each other, and where the cultivation of the mind introduces more refined notions of the Deity, the duties of religion and social life must be better understood, and ought to have a more extensive influence. But, alas! experience too often evinces the contrary. The circle of our connections may be extended; but the spirit of selfishness, which increases with every new object that courts our enjoyment, contracts our views within narrower limits; and our study is not how *we* may become beneficial to our fellow creatures, but how we may render *them* subservient to our own pleasures. Indulgence in sensual gratifications, the means of which are frequent in improved and wealthy states, obliterates the sense of that duty which we owe to the Author of our existence. And thus those closer connections, and that superior knowledge which should render us better neighbours and more pious worshippers of God, often become ineffectual, and, by creating new incitements to temporal pleasures, and facilitating the means of procuring them, frequently indispose us for the discharge of our duty.

This was the case with the Israelites, whom the prophet charges with oppressing
G 2 man,

man, and dishonouring God. But as they could not deny the charge, they were willing to compound the matter with the Almighty, both to quiet the remaining remonstrances of their conscience, and to avert the temporal vengeance with which they were threatened.

“Wherewith shall I come before the Lord,

“and bow myself before the high God?

“Shall I come before him with burnt-offer-

“ings and calves of a year old? Will the

“Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,

“and ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I

“give my first-born for my transgression, the

“fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?”

No, says the prophet, these things are inadequate to the great purposes of religion. They

do not improve the nature of man. They do

not promote his happiness as a rational being.

God therefore doth not require them. “Be-

“hold, the Almighty hath shewed thee, O

“man, what is good;” what is good for

thee. Thy benefit is what he consults; a

sacrifice of calves and rams, and an offering

of rivers of oil are not pleasing to *him*, be-

cause they are not profitable to *thee*: what

doth the Lord thy God require of thee but

those things which improve thee; which by

rendering thee better, impart to thee pure

and

and intellectual happiness? *He seeks thy felicity, which can only arise* from thy “doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with thy God:” these, therefore, he requires of thee.

Let us then consider the natural connection subsisting between the duties of morality and religion, to both of which we are by nature adapted, and in the union of which consists the complete intellectual bliss arising from conscious rectitude.

1. We should “do justice.” This phrase imports that we should abstain from injuring another in any way whatever; either by withholding or taking from him his due.

2. “To love mercy,” signifies that we cultivate those benevolent affections which lead us to promote the happiness of others, even when they have no positive claim to demand it of us.

3. “Walking humbly with God,” is to maintain a constant sense of *his supremacy* and *our dependence*, his goodness and our unworthiness; to love him, to worship him, and to do every thing to his glory.

A sense of the obligation we are under to do justice is implanted in our minds. That we have no right to defraud, oppress, or any

way injure another, is a truth that flows directly from our own feelings. Any injury that we receive we instantly resent, because we feel it to be wrong, and thus by our own feelings is the law established which forbids the doing of injuries. And as we are sensible of the moral obligation which binds others to do us justice, so likewise do we perceive that it operates with equal force to oblige us to do justice to them, since, as all men are equal by nature, the obligation must be mutual.—This law, so obviously right in itself, is continually broken: not from any pleasure that arises from conscious injustice, for the general sense of right and wrong, remains indelibly impressed on the human mind, and approbation constantly adheres to the former, and condemnation to the latter. But men are drawn from their duty by temporal and sensual pleasures. Of these they desire a larger share than their station in life authorises them to expect, or than they can obtain by fair and honest means. This desire disposes them to break the universal law of justice, which stands as an obstacle in their way. But still so conscious are they of the rectitude of that law, that though they will not submit to it themselves, yet to others they will allow

allow no exemption from it.—Are they in a high station, and removed beyond the effects of man's resentment? Or, being in an inferior state of life, does an opportunity of defrauding with impunity offer itself? What shall prevent them in these circumstances from defrauding their neighbour? Shall the sense of right and wrong? Shall a principle of honour? They may; they ought; they sometimes do: but they more frequently do not.—We need but look abroad in the world, and we shall soon be convinced how insufficient these means are to preserve men in their duty. Our moral principles must be supported by religion, or they will be often found too feeble a restraint against strong temptations. But let us put the case in as strong a light as we can. Let us suppose a man who arrogates to himself the principles of moral duty; who entertains a high esteem for what is right; who has felt the pleasure arising from conscious virtue; and values himself for his honour and integrity, but who despises religion, as fit only for the weak and credulous. In the sunshine of a prosperous life these principles may be sufficient for the discharge of the social duties. But let misfortunes invade him, let poverty besiege him, let temptations assault him; and

you shall soon see that the basis of his morality was not broad enough to sustain such violent concussions.—Fallen from his former prosperity, and threatened with a gaol, if an opportunity offer itself of *secretly* purloining the treasures of another, will he withstand the temptation? No human eye beholds him, no mortal will ever be acquainted with his guilt. His hand is stretched out to seize the property of another. And what shall withhold and draw it back? Shall honour? shall virtue? His necessities overcome the one, and his pride destroys the other. He has no prospect of future happiness to cheer his mind under the clouds of adversity; and therefore he yields to the guilty solicitations of his present distress. But place the religious man in similar circumstances; to him the temptation loses all its power; for though man does not see him, yet God beholds him; God, who is ever present to his mind. How then shall he dare to violate his laws? No! he will preserve his integrity, and banish the thought of dishonesty. Besides, the hope of future happiness, founded in the favour of the divine Being, not only preserves him in his duty, but administers such comfort, as supports him under all his afflictions, and enables him

him to bear with resignation those burdens under which the other sinks.

When pleasures multiply and are present to our view, the temptations to swerve from right are numerous and powerful: and then without the support of religion the principles of virtue lose much of their influence. But religion, by operating on our hopes and fears, is adapted to preserve us in our duty. And here we may admire the singular goodness of God, who, as civil society has improved, and luxuries have been introduced, and the means of gratifying the sensual appetites have been facilitated, has, either by prophets, or apostles, or teachers, caused the light of religion to shine more and more upon mankind, that the incentives to a virtuous and holy life, might be proportioned to the temptations to the contrary.

As virtuous sentiments, when not animated by the principles of religion, are insufficient to produce a flourishing and lasting morality, hence arises the necessity of uniting them together.

2. But this will be more evident if we ascend one step higher in the scale of morality, than merely not injuring our neighbour: and that is, "to love mercy."

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We are prompted by a principle of benevolence to do good to others; and this impulse of nature we should always comply with, if it cost us nothing; if neither avarice nor any other passion interfered to close our hand, and prevent it from obeying the dictate of the heart.—Now nothing but religion can enable us to govern our passions, and make us act conformably to reason: because nothing else presents us with motives sufficiently powerful: for as it teaches us to imitate and obey God; so does it upon these terms assure us of his favour, and the reward of endless bliss. The pleasures, too, of devotion being superior to all others, in a religious man, keep his mind in one constant and equal temper. And so nearly allied is the love of God and of our neighbour that he who is actuated by the former will never be deficient in the latter. The man who despises religion, but lays claim to virtue, may indeed frequently feast himself with the pleasures of beneficence: but still to him they must lose half their relish, because he knows nothing of that exquisite delight which arises from a sense of God's approbation. Besides, what reliance can there be on *his* kindness who is ungrateful to his great Benefactor? The principles from which his
good.

good deeds flow are certainly more liable to be corrupted; and the same or less temptations than those which will prevail on him to break the rules of justice, will stifle all active benevolence. Unstable as his fortune, inconstant as his humour, on his alms or kindness there can be no certain dependence. When our actions depend only upon our present dispositions, without any regard to futurity, and are not directed by some uniform law enforced by principles, capable of counteracting our passions, they are uncertain and irregular. Whereas the man who is actuated by the principles of religion is constant in the discharge of his duty. Benevolence actuated by piety becomes permanent; charity never ceasing to operate so long as reverence to God is retained.—If then a mere moralist can draw satisfaction from the discharge of social duties, when the motives to violate them are but small, what superior delight must the man of religion feel from that virtue which he is conscious of having preserved in the midst of the most violent temptations! He looks back with a triumphant pleasure when religion stood his friend, and enabled him to withstand those trials and seducements to which his moral virtue alone would have

have become a prey. He looks up with gratitude to that God who afforded him such assistance. *Commended* by those who know his integrity; blessed by those who have felt his bounty, which ever flowed in proportion to his ability; *satisfied* with himself, *approved* by his God, he enjoys the most refined pleasure of which the human mind is capable: and this pleasure is the surest earnest of his future virtue.

Having shewn that morality, when disunited from religion, is weak and uncertain, I come now to consider whether religion can exist without morality.

If religion consists in obeying the will of God, however it be made known to us, whether by reason or revelation, then there can be no actual religion without morality. But it has been the folly of a great part of mankind to delude themselves, and instead of obedience to offer sacrifice; to substitute a form of godliness in the place of true devotion. But religion is not external, it is internal, and the outward signs of it must flow from the inward disposition of the heart.

To worship God acceptably, we must worship him "in spirit and in truth:" without this
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all forms and ceremonies, all external acts of worship, degenerate into superstition. On the love of God and the love of man, says our Saviour, "hang all the law and the prophets." And again, "if ye love me, keep my commandments:" but our Saviour was God as well as man, therefore the love of God implies the keeping of the commandments of Christ. Now his commandments are that we be humble and meek in our deportment; patient of injuries, forgiving one another; honest and just in our dealings: kind and charitable in our dispositions and actions; willing to distribute, ready to communicate. And indeed how can we love God unless we delight in those virtues which he requires of us? Without this there can be no fellowship between him and us; no correspondence, no agreement whatever: for what alone can render God amiable to us, is the rectitude and goodness of his nature. Therefore, without we delight in rectitude and goodness we can never love him. The proud, the haughty, the malicious, the envious, the revengeful, the merciless, can have no love for him, who requires the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. The dishonest, the unsocial, the uncharitable man, as he is an enemy to his
fellow

fellow creatures, he can have no love to their Creator, who is good to all : as such a man is not actuated with the Spirit of God, he cannot truly worship—he does not love God. He may, indeed, draw near to God with his lips, but his heart will be far from him. Such worship is the very height of superstition, is an insult to common sense, and tends only to cherish our depravity. Of what use are religious ceremonies, if they do not keep alive in us a reverence for the Deity, and thereby dispose us the more to obey his commands? It is not the rite, the sacrifice, and the offering that are pleasing to God. Though thou offer to him thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, yet canst thou not add to his glory. Foolish man, canst thou increase the splendour of supreme excellence? canst thou confer a favour on Omnipotence? canst thou add to the happiness of essential Goodness?—God seeks not his own good in thy obedience. It is for thy benefit alone that he gives thee laws : that the authority of his injunction may preserve thee in the way of peace.—Thou art sensible that thou art an accountable creature : thou art sensible that it is thy duty to worship thy Creator. But canst thou devoutly adore thy God whilst
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thy heart imbibes not his precepts? Will thy prostrations be accepted by him, whilst the cries of the poor, whom thou hast oppressed or neglected to relieve, ascend up to him and will be heard?—What pleasure can thy devotions afford thee, whilst thy heart condemns thee? In thy mockery of religious worship can the divine grace descend to inflame thy soul with that glow of pure delight which lifts it up to God and heaven? If thy gross mind be estranged to the pleasure of virtue, how canst thou taste the more refined pleasures of religion?—No, thou must do justice, and love mercy, ere thou canst walk humbly with thy God. Without morality all thy outward forms are but arrogance, and arise in condemnation against thee. “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.” Walk humbly then with thy God. Cultivate with care those virtues he requires of thee. Let benevolence, kindness, peace, gentleness, meekness, temperance, humility, and goodness ever attend thee. Be fearful to offend, and never hope to satisfy Heaven by idle ceremonies and unmeaning praises.

Having shewn that our duty consists in the joint practice of religion and morality, and
that

that the one is necessary to the perfection of the other, let us now consider how the discharge of these tend to promote our happiness.

1. The pleasures of the mind, unlike those of the body, are permanent. The satisfaction arising from a kind and benevolent action, dies not away; it returns with every reflection that recalls the action to mind. The consciousness of rectitude is ever the same. The same self-approbation which rewarded our virtue in the actual discharge of our duty, must still continue so long as we can discern right from wrong. Pleasing is the reflection to a man, that he has discharged his duty, and triumphed over temptations: pleasing is the reflection that he has dispersed the afflictions of others, as the sun dispels the darkness: delightful the thought that the prayer of the fatherless and widow is poured forth to implore the selectest blessing of Heaven upon him. Can there be happiness more exalted? Yes, the glow of devotion will inflame it.—The approbation of the Deity, whom he has obeyed, and whom he has imitated, imparts a secret pleasure that sublimates his bliss. He blesses his God, who has bestowed upon him that grace which, amidst all

his trials has ever preserved him in his duty. To him heaven smiles, and all nature has a benign aspect. He every where traces the hand of God. If Divine Providence reduce his circumstances, yet still the fervour of his devotion is unabated, and he is assured that his heavenly Father will accept his benevolent disposition for the deed, and reward his humble resignation. Thus living under a continual sense of the divine favour, his happiness is not less certain in adversity than in prosperity: and death, the dread of the wicked and profane, opens his port to him as the haven of endless felicity. This is the reward of those who join devotion to morality. The one improves the other, and both are rendered lasting and delightful. United they bestow an ante-past of the joys of heaven: whereas, when separated, morality becomes feeble and uncertain, loses half its spring and half its pleasure; and devotion is an empty name. Be it our care, then, to cultivate in us the principles both of morality and religion. Nature has plainly formed us for both; has impressed a sense of both on our minds. No discharge of the one can atone for the neglect of the other; because in the hour of reflection our conscience must con-

demn us for such neglect; and when we most need, we shall be destitute of the comforts which arise from the union of constant virtue and sincere devotion.—It is the blessedness that arises from the exercise of these duties that makes God require them of us. It is our wisdom, therefore, and our interest to discharge them. We cannot injure *him* by the neglect of them; we cannot profit him by the discharge of them: the whole benefit redounds to ourselves. Since, therefore, he consults only our good, and to that end requires our obedience, let us, as we value our own happiness, be careful to “do justice, love “mercy, and walk humbly with our God.”

SERMON

S E R M O N VI.

ON THE INSTABILITY OF WEALTH.

Luke xii. 20, 21.

BUT GOD SAID UNTO HIM, THOU FOOL, THIS NIGHT THY SOUL SHALL BE REQUIRED OF THEE; THEN WHOSE SHALL THOSE THINGS BE WHICH THOU HAST PROVIDED? SO IS HE THAT LAYETH UP TREASURES FOR HIMSELF, AND IS NOT RICH TOWARDS GOD.

OUR Lord, who, in all his discourses, endeavoured to instruct his hearers in *true* wisdom, and to enrich them with eternal treasures, has in this parable given a very striking instance of the great *folly* and *poverty* of that man who has only worldly wisdom, and is possessed of nothing but what he may lose. The false estimation which men are apt to make of temporal wealth, leads them into a misapplication of it, and begets in them a spirit of covetousness: for they conceive riches to be what will infallibly render them happy, by procuring for them every other good, and, therefore, substituting them in the place of God's providence, they are anxious to amass as

great a share of them as they possibly can. That fondness for riches, that ardent desire to possess them, which this false idea of them creates, is in scripture frequently termed trusting in riches, and is a sort of covetousness not incompatible with justice, and is often found in those who are not at all remarkable for a deficiency in this virtue. But covetousness, though not attended with injustice, is however so absurd and profane, leads to such a misapplication of wealth, and renders a man so really poor, by building his hopes upon so very unstable a foundation, that he who is of that temper may be justly termed a fool. Accordingly we find that this was the appellation which our Lord gave to the covetous rich man in the parable. The parable consists of one of the finest pieces of instruction against this vice that was ever given, and exposes the folly of it in the strongest point of view. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully." We see this rich man used no unfair methods to increase his fortune; it was by agriculture, which is not only an innocent, but an *useful* and *honorable* employment. Nor did his covetousness consist in a continual heaping up, without any view of putting a period to his labours,

bours, when he should have amassed a sufficiency to last him his life; for as soon as he found himself thus affluent, he resolved to put an end to his cares, and begin to enjoy himself. “And he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do? I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow my fruits and goods: and I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” Wherefore his covetousness consisted in the satisfaction which he took in his goods and fruits, in putting a high value on the pleasures of luxury, which they afforded, and in proposing to derive all his happiness from them alone, without taking God and religion into his scheme at all. For this end he coveted wealth, and to this use he determined to apply it, now he was possessed of it. And how many are like him! Of how many men do the ultimate views terminate in the gratifications of sense. They propose to devote one half of their life to the toil and labour of amassing riches, that they may dedicate the other half to a luxurious enjoyment of them. Yet how absurd is this design, even in a worldly view! For who can say that more than the present

hour is his own? When the fortune is acquired, who can say that he shall live to enjoy it? If sensual pleasures be our ultimate view, the wisest way is, surely, to seize the present opportunity, to amass little, but to expend our riches as they come in, "to eat and drink to day, for to-morrow we die." But even supposing that we were sure to live long, is age the proper season for high gratifications? In the decline of our days we cannot relish those festive scenes of gaiety, which are so captivating in youth. The sensual gratifications, which riotous living and sumptuous fare afford, require the strength and vigour of youth to support them. Temperance, rest, and quiet, best suit the weakness of age, and becomes more and more requisite, as the evening of life advances: and, therefore, the sensual appetites can never be so highly indulged, nor the pleasures and gaieties of life so much relished as in youth, and the prime of manhood. A few exceptions of men who have been robust in the later days of life, and have enjoyed what is called a green old age, make no objection; since they have owed this advantage to an uncommonly vigorous constitution, carefully preserved by the strictest temperance. Youth, therefore, and the early
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part of manhood must be looked upon as the most proper season for enjoying sensual pleasures. To act wisely, then, as a sensualist, a man should only save so much as will support him decently in age, if he arrive to it, and enjoy the rest whilst it is in his power, while he has time and strength. But even this, though the best plan, is an absurd one; for as age cannot bear irregularity and excess, so intemperance in youth lays up a store of diseases for age, and renders the latter part of life burdensome and miserable. How *foolish*, how *mad* are men when they act below themselves; when they aspire no higher than to the pleasures of a brute, whilst they are capable of those of angels! The pleasures of sense are as much beneath those of the mind in their nature as in their duration. And no indulgence of the animal appetites is equal to the gratification of good affections. The highest luxury which riches afford is to indulge in benevolence, to feast the soul with acts of kindness and charity. To give food to the hungry is a treat to a rational creature, much more exquisite than the most costly dainties: to clothe the naked, is to wear a robe fit for an immortal spirit, far superior to purple and fine linen. The very design

of doing good, dignifies and ennobles the soul. Though we should never be capable of executing our kind purposes, yet still we should be sensible of the rectitude and amiableness of them. Though we be prevented from gratifying our good affections, yet still we may be possessed of that principle of virtue which the understanding approves, and, consequently, our superior, the rational and divine part of us, will be equally satisfied.

But the rich man in the parable thought of none but himself, and of no part of himself but his body. "I will pull down my "barns and build greater." Perhaps one might be apt to think that it would have been more natural for him to have built another barn, to receive the surplus of his store, rather than to have been at the trouble and expence of pulling down his old barns, and building greater. But if we look into the nature of man, we shall find that our Saviour, who knew what was in man, has expressed the most likely manner in which one of that turn of mind would act. He was now become greater than ever, and this world was his sole object; his buildings must, therefore, be suited to his increased fortune, and, in their size and stile, partake of his grandeur ;

deur ; the whole must be of a piece, and no marks of his former lower state remain, which would wound his pride : for half the pleasure which the rich and luxurious receive, is derived from the appearance that they make in the eyes of the world. Deprive them of public view, let them live unknown and unseen, and the humble cottage shall satisfy them as well as the stately palace. But place them in a situation where they may be seen, and they wish to attract attention, and are dissatisfied, unless, from a superior and splendid appearance, they can excite admiration, and be reckoned great and happy. Mankind are too apt to seek esteem from external appearance ; and, though it be very absurd to do so, yet it is a fault into which men of otherwise good sense frequently fall ; but surely the opinion of those men who measure real worth by contingencies, is despicable ; nor can a man be conscious of intrinsic excellence from any outward shew that he may make. Yet so much is the judgment of mankind warped by custom, and so apt are they to value themselves from their appearance, to annex the idea of excellence to that of greatness, and to claim admiration from grandeur, that there are few who
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are not more anxious to gain and preserve a fortune, for the sake of a brilliant appearance in a high stile of life, than to acquire real merit. For this reason it was proper to describe the rich man as intending to pull down his barns, and build greater: for, since this life was to constitute the sole of his happiness, he could not renounce so essential a part as that which would arise from the figure he would make, and the attention and respect he would acquire by large and new buildings. And as mankind are the same in all ages, we now see those who aim at nothing but the pleasures of this world, indulge their vanity in the same manner. When, by the providence of God, they have grown rich, their next care is to display their wealth: for wealth unseen, how vile a thing is it to those whose only merit consists in the possession of it, and who would remain unnoticed for ever, did not its external glitter attract attention. I would not insinuate that the stile and appearance which men ought to make in life should not correspond with their fortune. Since the Almighty, by his providence, makes a distinction of stations, that distinction should be preserved: but yet no man ought to value himself upon his grandeur; for no external
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ON THE INSTABILITY OF WEALTH. 10

good is properly a man's own. The only real benefit he can reap from riches, arises from the proper use of them; but that surely does not consist in applying one part of them to fine buildings, merely to gratify his vanity, and all the rest to a luxurious and sumptuous fare, that he may indulge his appetites.

“ I will say to my soul, eat, drink, and be merry.” How unworthy was this design of a rational creature! Were there no other use which he could have made of his stores, it were better to have let them perish; for all excessive sensual indulgence, is not only contrary to virtue and religion, but disqualifies a man for improvement in knowledge. As it renders the habit of the body gross, so it enervates and oppresses the mind, and prevents it from exerting its faculties to that degree which it would otherwise be capable of doing: but in the strength, vigour, and improvement of the mental faculties, the felicity of a rational creature greatly consists. Truth and knowledge are the only food for the understanding, which they constantly gratify, and never produce satiety. If a man be superior to a beast, it is because he is rational, and capable of intellectual enjoyments. To sacrifice, therefore, these enjoyments, for the pleasures

fures of a brute, and sink to a level with the beasts that perish, is a mark of great baseness and degeneracy. How much better would this man have resolved, if he had said, my riches now enable me to procure the means of knowledge, and of improving myself in various branches of science; the leisure and convenience which I now enjoy, I will, therefore, dedicate to these purposes. I will improve myself, patronise the learned, and promote every good and useful work. This surely would have been more worthy of a rational creature, than, "I will take mine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Ease! Alas, little ease belongs to the laborious employment of drunkenness and gluttony; and excessive eating and drinking will soon put an end to mirth, and bring on lasting pain and misery.

As this voluptuary determined to pamper his body, and neglect his mind, it cannot be thought that he would improve the virtuous affections of the heart; especially that particular one by which we are naturally prompted to relieve distress; I mean *charity*. He was resolved to enjoy the whole to himself, regardless of the distresses of the poor; to riot whilst others were in want. Charity is one of the

wisest

wisest ways of disposing of wealth; it is in scripture said "to be lending to the Lord; and to be laying up a store "where the thief "cannot steal, nor the moth corrupt." And justly is this said of it, because it is employing our abundance in that way which God most approves, and which he will most reward in the next life.

The pleasure arising from our own approbation, from the love of those whom we relieve, and from the esteem of those who are acquainted with our kind actions, though infinitely more valuable than what it costs us, is not however the whole which beneficent actions will procure us. God has pledged himself, that they who, from kind and good motives, now imitate his liberality, and disperse abroad, and give to the poor, shall partake of a larger share of his favor hereafter; and the blessedness which he can and will impart to such, no one can deprive them of. Other ways of employing our abundance, though perhaps laudable, have not that peculiar amiableness, nor bestow that exalted satisfaction of heart as charity. To dry the tear of affliction; to be a father to the fatherless, and a friend to the needy, is to imitate God in his most glorious attribute.

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PIO ON THE INSTABILITY OF WEALTH.

How exquisitely delightful must that man's sensations be, whose reason applauds him, whilst he is indulging the finest feelings of the heart; whilst he sees himself the author of good; sees misery flee before him, and joy spread itself around wherever he appears; whilst he hears the prayers of those who are made happy by his bounty ascend up to the God of heaven in his behalf: yes, they ascend to God, the patron of the righteous and merciful, and will be remembered by him in the day of general judgment; then shall they plead the good man's cause, and procure him a reward with tenfold interest. The voluptuous and proud know not what real pleasure and greatness is. The pleasure of doing good is the highest luxury, it is a feast for angels; and the honour it bestows, the dignity it imparts, the veneration it procures, is true greatness, far superior to the pomp and pageantry of state. If to have it in our *power* to do good be *great*; it is *glorious*, it is *divine* to exert that power. But the rich man in the parable knew nothing of this; to eat and to drink was his highest felicity. And may not the same be said of all those, who, being in affluent circumstances, spend their whole fortune upon themselves, forget-
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ful of those who are in want? It matters nothing whether they be slaves to the table or not; for if, whilst others are hungry and naked, they lavish their whole fortune upon themselves, they are equally culpable, unfeeling and cruel, and are poor towards God. Now, though charity alone does not constitute a man rich towards God, yet it is indispensibly necessary to insure our eternal welfare, since, without it, all our other virtues are nothing worth. For, if all the law and the prophets tend to these two things, and our whole duty be comprised in them, (namely, the love of God, and the love of man,) and if, as St. John argues, "we do not love man, "whom we have seen, we cannot love God, "whom we have not seen," and who commands us to love our neighbour; then it must follow, that those parts of our conduct which appear virtuous are not so in fact, because they do not proceed from right principles. Hence charity, though not the whole of our duty, is however so indispensable, that it measures the worth of our other performances. But this rich man, as he was devoid of charity to his poor neighbours, so was he of piety to God. He thought not at all on God, who had blessed him with an increase

crease of wealth. Ungrateful to the bountiful Donor, whose clouds had dropped down fatness upon his lands, and made them bring forth plentifully, he did not so much as offer him the least praise or thanksgiving. But this is not to be greatly wondered at, for they who are determined to misapply the good gifts of God, to make an immoral use of them, cannot retain God in their thoughts. There is such an evident incongruity between praising God for his goodness, and at the same time resolving to abuse his favors, and displease him, that whoever incline to the latter cannot be disposed to the former. Were a man, who proposes to himself a riotous and luxurious life, to enter first into his chamber, and, prostrating himself before the God of heaven and earth, adore him for his bountiful goodness, it would naturally produce this suggestion, "I ought to use thy gifts to thy honor and glory;" it would naturally excite this prayer; "O grant me grace so to do:" it would create such a strong sense of the impropriety and wickedness of his future designs, that he could not enter upon them with any complacency and satisfaction: and, therefore, as piety and devotion disqualify men for immoral pleasures, they who re-

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solve to indulge in *these*, must be indisposed
 for *those*. Accordingly we see the sensualist
 and voluptuous always proportionably ir-
 religious.—This man, then, without taking God
 at all into his scheme, planned scenes of fu-
 ture happiness, in eating and drinking, in
 mirth and jollity. But how soon are all hu-
 man views blasted! how easy is it for God
 to cast a cloud of adversity over all the gay
 prospects of man, and convert his mirth into
 sorrow! Or even to arrest him by the hand
 of death in that hour, when he thinks to set
 off in a long career of festivity and joy. The
 uncertainty of life is itself a sufficient reason
 why man should not draw schemes of happi-
 ness from the prospect of future temporal
 enjoyments. Death should never be for-
 gotten in any of our schemes; for the vigour
 of youth is as subject to his power as the
 weakness of age. Yet such is the infatuation
 which riches produce in the minds of worldly
 men, that they reckon on a long course of
 life: they consider not the frailty of their
 frame, but, confining their views to this world,
 always protract in idea the time of their life;
 because the thought of death to those who
 now enjoy prosperity, and have no hopes af-

ter death is gloomy and dreadful. "O death," says the son of Sirach, "how bitter is the remembrance of thee, to a man who liveth at rest in his possessions; to the man who hath nothing to vex him, and that hath prosperity in all things; yea unto him who is able to receive meat." And therefore those men who make this world their all, shun the unpleasing thought of death, and endeavour to think as little on their latter end as if it were never to come; and flatter themselves with the prospects of events which they are not sure of. "Go to now," says St. James, "ye that say to-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain; whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is our life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away:" and when this transient vapour is vanished, when this life is expired, what will become of all our gains and possessions? Yet so void of reflection are the sensual and worldly, that, like the rich fool in the parable, they count upon long and happy days; but often, like his, is their life cut short in the very commencement of their jollity. "Thou fool, this night shall thy
" soul

“ soul be required of thee : then whose shall
 “ those things be which thou hast prepared ?
 “ So is he that layeth up treasures for him-
 “ self, and is not rich towards God.” How
 poor does this man now appear ; taken at
 once from all his riches, without having ever
 enjoyed them, and hurried into a state for
 which he had not made the least provision ;
 into a state where poverty is a crime, because
 there all may come rich, rich in eternal trea-
 sures ! How conspicuous is his folly, to have
 treated mutable and perishable things, as stable
 and eternal ; to have thought of satisfying his
 immortal soul with earthly food ! how great
 was his impiety, to have marked out a plan
 for the abuse of God’s gifts, and to have
 thought to spend his life in dissipation and
 excess ! Yet the pleasure he proposed in his
 foolish and wicked schemes was never en-
 joyed ; he was suddenly snatched from the
 wealth he had amassed, and obliged to
 leave it to he knew not whom. “ So is he
 “ who layeth up treasures for himself, and is
 “ not rich towards God.” It would not have
 much abated the folly of his conduct if he
 had even been sure of a long life ; for what is
 the span of man’s life compared to eternity !
 and what are the pleasures of sense when past ?

As soon as they are over, they are as if they had never been, and leave no marks of joy behind. It would therefore be equally foolish to seek our ultimate happiness in them, even though we were sure to enjoy them for the age of man. We may observe, that from the words in which our Lord closes this parable, it by no means follows that riches in this world implies poverty in the next.—“So is he that layeth up treasures for himself, and is not rich towards God.” Which plainly implies that the possession of riches in this world is very compatible with laying up treasures in the next. But the misfortune is that men seldom desire and rarely use them for any other purpose than the gratification of their lusts. Yet a man who is rich may surely cultivate the talents he is endowed with, may endeavour to improve his mind in all useful knowledge, may cultivate those good dispositions which God has implanted in the human heart, may acquire a prevailing pious, and charitable disposition, and be as remarkable for the worth of his character as for the worth of his fortune. But the generality of men who covet riches, covet them, not for the opportunities which they afford of improving themselves and doing good, but only
to

to fulfil the lusts of the flesh, the folly of which our Lord has so strongly shewn.—For, to conclude in the words of a late pious commentator, “ This parable affords us a perfect picture of those whose affections are engrossed in the things of this present life. They forget that riches, honours, and powers are bestowed on them in trust. They do not consider that God has put them into their hands for the good of others, and for their own improvement in virtue, by the opportunities which they afford of exercising good dispositions. They rather look upon those advantages merely as instruments of luxury, and use them accordingly. But at the very time they are inwardly applauding themselves in having such an abundance of the means of pleasure, and are laying schemes for futurity, as if they were never to die, and are thinking of nothing but happy days, God suddenly strips them of all their joys. While they are idly busy in gathering together the treasures of an ant hillock, or in building children’s tottering piles, the foot of death treads them down, and spurns all abroad; so that they and their projects perish at once.” MACKNIGHT.

118 ON THE INSTABILITY OF WEALTH.

Let us, then, my brethren, wisely resolve
so to act, that we may be rich towards God,
that our treasures being laid up in heaven,
we may enjoy them for ever, when death
shall have removed us from this world.

SERMON

S E R M O N VII.

ON SHAME.

1 Peter, iv. 16.

IF ANY MAN SUFFER AS A CHRISTIAN, LET HIM
NOT BE ASHAMED.

IT hath pleased the wise Author of nature to implant in man a love of praise, and dread of blame; the former to incite him to worthy and honourable actions; the latter to deter from those which are base and vile.

This dread of blame is termed *shame*, and is a principle which operates two ways. It has an influence, 1. upon our moral conduct: 2. upon the improvement of our intellectual abilities.—When men commit any immoral action, they are sensible that it is wrong and base, and draws upon them condemnation from all intelligent beings, and even from themselves, for nothing can destroy the turpitude of an action which is essentially and evidently wrong and unworthy. The dread which men have of being accounted infamous

and vile, if they act wickedly, serves to deter them from wicked actions; or, after they have been guilty of them, the dislike which they have to be stigmatized, and branded with an odious character, serves to punish and deter them from committing the same again. This part of shame respects morality, and was designed to cherish and support it. The other part was designed to prevent man from sinking into, or remaining in disgraceful ignorance, and to excite his emulation to improve his understanding, and acquire every useful and ornamental accomplishment.—Man feels it to be his distinguished privilege, that he is a rational being; that he is capable of acquiring knowledge, of discovering truth, and discerning the relations that subsist between things. It is this capacity of knowledge which he perceives raises him above the brutes, and in the improvement of which, his highest honour, as an intelligent being, consists. To mistake, therefore, one thing for another, or to misconceive of things, is a mark of a weak understanding; and to appear defective in that which is the distinguishing privilege of the human race above other animals, is a sort of humiliation to which

which, the love of praise implanted in every man, renders him averse. And, therefore, where men are conscious of their ignorance, they are generally willing to conceal it, knowing that it is a blemish; and that gross mistakes expose them to contempt and ridicule. Now, as whatsoever excites contempt and laughter, always implies some mistake and inferiority of the intellect in the person who is the object of it, mankind are, in general, very averse to do or say any thing which they know will expose them to the jests and sneers of others: it hurts their pride to be thought deficient in their understanding; and they are more ashamed of being accounted a fool, than at being bad men. This sense of shame is of great influence in the conduct of men, it often supersedes their moral sense, especially during the early part of life, before experience has taught them to despise those opinions of other men which will not stand the test of sober reason.—Hence it becomes highly necessary to regulate the influence which this passion ought to have; for, according to its due or undue influence, will its effects be very good or very bad.—When rightly directed it becomes the guard of innocence, and
a spur

a spur to improvement. When suffered to operate improperly, it exposes men to be corrupted by the licentious and profane, and laughed out of every thing that is serious and religious. "There is a shame (says the son of Syrac) that bringeth sin, and there is a shame that is glory and grace." Now as religion is made the standing jest of some mens witticisms, hence it comes to pass, that the most shame-faced, that is the most innocent and best-disposed part of mankind, are in continual danger of being corrupted, and bantered and ridiculed out of their good inclinations, and induced to abandon those duties which they find expose them to the derision of the proud, and the scorn of those numerous tribes of little wits which infest almost every place; and what mischievous effects this has hitherto had, and may still have, upon the minds of such persons, is but too obvious.

I shall, therefore, endeavour to fortify you against the excess of the passion of shame, by shewing,

1. The danger of its undue influence.
2. I shall shew that no man need be ashamed of religion.

And

And, lastly, consider the baseness and dreadful consequences of being governed by the opinions of the wicked.

First, The danger of the wrong use and undue influence of this passion, is as great as the being liable to be corrupted, and drawn into an immoral, licentious, and profane life can make it. It deprives a man of the proper use of his reason, and renders him merely an imitative animal; or, if he think and judge for himself, yet, as he forms his manners solely after the example of others, his reason serves him for no other purpose than to condemn and make him miserable. He ceases to be master of himself, and becomes a slave to the opinions, and humours, the follies and wickedness of others. Men of this temper are continually liable to be drawn aside from their duty to God and man, by every ignorant fellow who mistakes impudence for manliness, and laughing at, and ridiculing every thing serious and sacred, for wit.—Hence, those whose inclinations were naturally virtuous and religious, but who have been under the influence of this mistaken modesty, have been seduced from their duty, and drawn into the greatest vices, rather than undergo the sneers and scorn of others ;
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the example of the generality, *i. e.* of the worst part of mankind, has prevailed over the dictates of their conscience, and they have been carried away by the stream of fashion, have become real fools, because they were *ashamed* to be accounted such.—If we examine into the springs and principles of their actions, we shall find that the influence of false shame has been the ruin of many, especially of the younger class, for it is most predominant in youth; young folks, through want of experience, not being able so well to discern the defects of others, and conscious of very few excellencies of their own, yet they wish not to appear inferior to their companions, but to be approved and admired; or, at any rate, to avoid contempt and ridicule, and, therefore, are betrayed into a compliance with those vices which their heart condemns.—But thus bad habits are induced, and that disposition which gave admission to these, will easily lead to greater crimes.—When men renounce their own judgment, and give themselves up wholly to the guidance of others, there is no duty so sacred, but they may be brought to neglect it; no crime so atrocious, but by degrees they may be induced to perpetrate it. The admonitions of the virtuous
and

and pious will have little weight with men of this cast: for, by reasoning with them they treat them as men whose understanding is not defective, and, therefore, their pride and vanity is rather flattered than hurt by it. —But the sneers and jests which the wicked and profane, supported by the general example, cast upon them, by treating them as fools, and holding them out in a ridiculous light, is a shock which their pride and vanity cannot bear: they, therefore, readily join in with all their vices and follies, being ashamed, and afraid not to comply. With their fair speeches they cause such to yield, or, by a few jests and reproachful words, even force them to it. It is impossible to relate all the evil consequences arising from the excess of this passion: some it has driven into expences too great for them to bear; others it has betrayed into gambling for high sums of money, to the total ruin of their fortune; others it has led into drunkenness, and every scene of riot and debauchery; others, to neglect all religious duties, and to treat them with contempt and ridicule; others, to curse and swear and profane the sacred name of God in the most shocking, horrid, and blasphemous manner. For men, from an excess
of

of shame, to become thus infamous and abandoned in their conduct, even against their first-formed principles and inclinations, is dreadful and lamentable.—Where they ought to blush, there they are not ashamed; and what they ought to glory in, that they are ashamed of. Since, therefore, the influence of this passion is so very great, it is highly necessary to have it properly directed. And, to this end, I shall endeavour to offer some arguments to persuade men from ever giving way to false and mistaken modesty, by shewing,

2. That no man need be ashamed of religion.

As I supposed the excess of this passion to proceed from a dread of appearing and being treated as of shallow understanding, we may observe that this dread is ill founded, when men apprehend that the discharge of their duty will expose them to be thus meanly thought of: which will appear, when we consider that religion, the root and support of all virtue, and what the scoffers first attack, and constantly make their standing jest, is the highest honour and greatest ornament of man. For a man to be religious, is a proof that he is possessed of those qualifications which reflect

fect the greatest lustre on him as a rational and moral agent. For, is not knowledge a perfection? Is it not an excellence to be capable of acquiring it, and of tracing all things to their first cause, of considering the nature and perfections of that first cause, and thence deducing various important truths? Certainly it is a great excellence to be capable of doing this; and, therefore, it is the high privilege of man that he is capable of religion; that he can discover a Being infinitely wise and good, the author of all that exists; can trace the rectitude of his dispensations, can penetrate into the views of his œconomy, can enter into his gracious designs, and perceive the whole to be directed by wisdom consummate and benevolence infinite. And it is his high happiness that he can thence deduce his own immortality, and raise well-grounded hopes, that, if he act agreeably to the nature which God hath given him, he shall be rewarded with eternal bliss.

To know small things, and be unacquainted with great ones, which we are capable of discovering; to be conversant with trifles, and yet ignorant of what most essentially concerns us, is a mark of the most contemptible folly. But what knowledge is so great as that
which

which relates to the perfections and will of the Supreme Being? What so important as that which concerns our own eternal welfare? And if this knowledge, of which man is capable, and which is evidently the greatest and most important of all knowledge, be his perfection as an intelligent agent, so to act agreeably to it must be his perfection as a moral agent. And, since man can have no reason to be ashamed of being capable of religion, which implies the perfection of the understanding, he surely can have no reason of being ashamed of being religious, which implies the perfection of the heart as well as of the mind: for, is not gratitude an excellence? Do we not reckon those men to be vile and worthless who are insensible of the favours they have received? Is it not a blemish in their character, that whilst they feel and enjoy the kindness of others, they themselves have no love for their benefactors? And, if he be so contemptible, whose gratitude is defective towards man, he is much more so who is destitute of it towards God.—The world we inhabit, the blessings we enjoy, prove the existence and goodness of God. Must he not be stupid who cannot discern this? Must he not be insensible who is not suitably affected by

by it? Is there any father so capable, or that hath shewn his will so great, to do good to his children, as our heavenly Father, upon whose continual bounty we live, and enjoy all the blessings of life? Is it not most infamous and disgraceful to a rational being, to be void of all taste for the highest rational and moral excellencies, and to be regardless and insensible of the greatest benefits?—The superiority of man over brutes consists in his being rational, that whilst they only receive the gifts of God, he can discover the hand that deals them, can trace the divine benevolence, can discern and admire its perfection, can feast his mind with contemplating, and is even capable of imitating it. If the capacity to do this renders him superior to the brutes, not to be suitably affected by the Divine goodness, degrades him below them; for the generous ox knoweth his owner, and the faithful dog loves his master.

It is shameful and disgraceful to a rational creature not to be religious, because religion tends to his improvement, and is the privilege of his nature. For a man to adore and love God, whom he admires as the greatest, and perceives to be the best of beings; to celebrate those excellencies, and imitate that

ness which he discerns to be infinitely amiable; to honour, reverence, and obey him in whom he perceives all things great and glorious to centre, is not only a duty but a perfection; and not to do it, not only discovers a hard and insensible heart, that cannot be affected by what is most lovely, nor won by the greatest goodness, but it is acting contrary to reason, and not treating God as what he is; and therefore argues a baseness and turpitude that is altogether inexcusable.—As he must be an idiot, who is incapable of religion, so he must be shameful and worthless who is not influenced by it: and if weakness of the intellect expose a man to pity, turpitude of heart, and not acting agreeably to the knowledge he possesses, exposes him to contempt and detestation.

For a man to be ashamed of religion, is to suppose it unworthy of him. But since it treats of the most sublime and important truths of which the human mind is capable, he has no reason to be ashamed of professing or practising it, for none but a fool will neglect or despise it. And will any one dread the jeers of fools, whilst he enjoys the approbation and esteem of all wise and sensible men? We should do well to consider who
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and what kind of men they are who ridicule virtue and religion, for then we should value their opinion of us no more than it deserves. They must either be defective in their understanding, or heart; and whichever it is, they are unworthy our notice.

But further. Let us consider the baseness and evil consequences of being influenced by the opinions of the wicked.

It shews a mean and little spirit to renounce our own judgment and let the follies of others direct and rule us. What slave can be more degraded than to be forced to do what he perceives to be wrong, and what he dislikes, and what will end in his destruction? None but the wretch who voluntarily submits to it.—What should we think of the man who, instead of resolutely maintaining his birth-right and freedom, should voluntarily surrender them, and basely become the slave of a tyrant? Should we not treat him with every mark of contempt? But does not he act in this manner who gives up that freedom which God and nature has conferred upon him, by making the opinions of those whom he despises the rule of his conduct?—It has ever been accounted a mark of true magnanimity not to regard what opinions men may

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may entertain of us any farther than they are founded in truth and justice. And it was always esteemed as the most noble character for a man, to have the wise and discerning say of him, he aims more at *being* great and good, than at appearing so in the judgment of the world. Whereas, to be afraid of the disesteem of the people, and to depend in the conduct of our lives upon their approving and disapproving us, has been always looked upon as the token of a little and ignoble spirit, more fond to get applause than to deserve it.—To this we may add that virtue, a good conscience, and pleasing God, is of much more value than all the applauses of men; and therefore, to sacrifice these for vulgar praise is a most unpardonable folly.—But lastly, the consequences of being so much the slaves of false shame as to renounce religion is dreadful indeed. For our Saviour himself hath told us that when he comes to judgment he will disown that person who has been ashamed to own and obey him. “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father and his holy angels.”

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We have not time to say much to shew the force of this argument, nor does it want it. The salvation of a man's soul is of such infinite importance to him that nothing can be put in competition with it; and he must be more than a fool who will not bear all things, sacrifice all things to save his soul, and gain the applause of God and his Redeemer.

I have now shewn the danger of the undue influence of the passion of shame. I have shewn that religion is what no man need be ashamed of. I have shewn the meanness of spirit in becoming slaves to the opinions of others; and lastly, the dreadful consequences of being ashamed where our soul is concerned, of being ashamed of our Redeemer and our duty to him.

Let us then remember the terrors of the Lord, and not suffer ourselves to be ashamed, or laughed out of that which is good; but as we know what decency, virtue, and religion, require of us, let us inflexibly adhere to it, as what is most honourable and most interesting. Let us disregard the scoffs and jeers of the profane and foolish, knowing that their approbation would be our disgrace. Conscious of the rectitude of our intentions and the justice and wisdom of our conduct, let

us persevere in the path of virtue, and suffer nothing to divert us from our course, for straight is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth to everlasting life, and few there be that find it, because few persevere in the difficult way that leads to it. But as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, let us take up our daily cross and follow him who was despised and rejected, and set at nought; so shall we render ourselves meet to be partakers of that bliss which he has gone to prepare for those who continue faithful unto the end.

SERMON

S E R M O N VIII.

CHARACTER OF CHRIST'S SHEEP.

John x. 16.

AND OTHER SHEEP I HAVE WHICH ARE NOT OF THIS FOLD: THEM ALSO I MUST BRING, AND THEY SHALL HEAR MY VOICE; AND THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD.

OUR Lord, among other things, came to put an end to that mistaken and pernicious notion which the Jews, from their self-partiality, had vainly adopted; viz. that they were the peculiar favourites of Heaven, merely because they were the children of Abraham; and to convince mankind that God is no respecter of persons, but that in every nation he that worketh righteousness and feareth God is accepted by him: he therefore began to prepare the minds of his disciples for this doctrine, and gradually to undermine their

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prejudices. Several of his parables tend to this purpose. That of the good Samaritan placed the virtue of an enemy in so amiable a light, that they were forced to acknowledge his merit, and had nothing to object when commanded to imitate it. In the text our Lord intimates, the subjects of his kingdom were not confined to any particular denomination of men, but that he chose them on account of their character. That not the Israelites alone, but also other good men, of whatever nation they were, would be acknowledged and gathered in by him; for, says he, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."

1. "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold." The fold here alluded to is the nation of Israel; and the other sheep are the Gentiles. And this expression implies that neither all of the one nor the other fold were his sheep, but that he had sheep in each of those folds; for he does not say that he had another fold, which would signify that both all the Jews and Gentiles were his sheep; nor does he say that he had other sheep besides this fold, which would signify that all the

the Jews were his sheep: but he says, "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold;" i. e. My fold is selected both from Jews and Gentiles. His sheep, scattered abroad throughout the earth, and wandering in the errors of various religions, were to be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and to form one fold, one holy catholic or universal church. It mattered not whether they were Jews or Gentiles, bond or free, for all whose hearts were so susceptible of the impressions of religious truths as to be influenced by them, who were desirous to worship God according to the best of their knowledge, and in that manner which they deemed most acceptable to him, were to be brought to the knowledge of the truth, because they would obey it. Men of this disposition, having the principle of piety within them, were fit to be gathered into the fold of Christ; they were his sheep. And without this disposition no church or sect to which they might belong could make them of the flock of Christ; for as *they* are not all Israel who *call* themselves Israel, so *they* are not all Christians who *call* themselves Christians. But yet, as in every nation under heaven there are devout men, so there are in every nation

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nation Christ's sheep; for all moral and devout men are Christ's sheep, and only want to be instructed in the truth to become professors of the faith.

Having seen who are meant by the sheep, let us consider the reason why they are called sheep. Among the Israelites, the office of a shepherd was very honourable, being the employment of the founders of their nation, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve patriarchs: hence the word shepherd came to signify a head or chief, and the people under them were called sheep; implying authority, care and tenderness, in the one, and submission in the other. Scripture abounds in expressions of this sort. Thus the word shepherd is frequent for a prophet and a king; "they are shepherds that cannot understand." "I will set up one shepherd over them, even my servant David." So he fed them with a faithful and true heart, and ruled them prudently with all his power.* "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they shall have one shepherd; they shall also walk in my judgments and observe my statutes to do them."† And

* Ps. lxxviii. 73.

† Ez. xxxvii. 24.

as kings were called shepherds; so, by the same metonymy, is God called a shepherd, and his true worshippers sheep. "Hear, O thou Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a sheep, he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand." Hence too the ancient prophecies concerning our Saviour often described him under the character of a Shepherd. "Behold the Lord God will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arms, and shall gently lead those that are with young."*—"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered, and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."† And our Lord assumes this character to himself. "I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. The good shepherd knoweth his sheep, and calleth them all by their names."

* Is. xl. 10, 11.

† Zech. xiii. 7.

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This is spoken in allusion to the custom of the Jewish shepherds, whose care of their sheep, and familiarity with them, was so remarkable that they gave them all names, to which they answered as dogs do with us, following their shepherds to the pasture, or wherever he chose to lead them. There was an affection between the shepherds and sheep among the Israelites, of which we have no example among us, and therefore are apt to be surprized at some expressions in Scripture concerning them, as extravagantly hyperbolic, such as in Nathan's parable of the ewe lamb, in which he says, "There was a poor man who had one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter." And this affection was so strong as to induce the shepherds to hazard any danger in the protection of their sheep. Thus David, at the hazard of his life, encountered a lion and a bear to rescue a lamb. But this affection was what rendered them proper emblems of Christ and his church, and accounts for the propriety of those expressions which we meet with in Scripture under this figure: as, "The good
" shep-

“shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. The
 “hireling seeth the wolf coming, and leav-
 “eth the sheep and fleeth. But I am the
 “good Shepherd, and lay down my life for
 “my sheep;” and hence Christ is called the
 Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. There is
 a farther reason for the use of this metaphor,
 arising from the nature and disposition of
 sheep, in which they represent several of those
 qualities and virtues which are found in the
 persons signified by it. Sheep are innocent,
 harmless, meek, gentle, patient, and tracta-
 ble; so those who belong to the flock of
 Christ are possessed of those placid virtues,
 and without these no one can be of the true
 fold of Christ.

1st. They are innocent; i. e. design no in-
 jury to any one: and this is one character
 of the Christian disposition; for they who
 seek to promote their interest at another's ex-
 pence are so far removed from that benevolence
 which the Gospel requires that they are com-
 pared to ravening wolves. The very design
 of injuring another is expressly forbid, and
 the harbouring of bad thoughts is declared
 to be a most defiling sin; and with the great-
 est reason is it, for out of the heart proceed
 adulteries, murders, and thefts. But he that
 doeth

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doeth these things, he that thinketh these things, cannot be a true disciple of Christ, for he requires us to have a conscience void of offence.

2d. Not only an innocent mind, but harmless conduct is required of the Christian; i. e. that he not only does not *design* to injure his neighbour, but that he be cautious not to do it inadvertently. Many people, who intend no ill to any one, yet by their thoughtless conduct give great offence. Without any bad intention, they often do what is productive of very disagreeable consequences to others, and injure unintentionally. Now though such people cannot be charged with the guilt of malice, yet they are certainly guilty of being deficient in that regard to the welfare of other men, the want of which argues a proportionable want of charity. They wish no ill to their neighbour; but their charity or love of him is not fervent, for if it were it would keep them on their guard from doing or saying any thing to his prejudice. But as it is required of Christians to love their neighbour as themselves, so it is consistently required that they be circumspect in their behaviour, doing no hurt to any one, giving none offence. Nay, it is
much

much more blameable to injure another through our inadvertency than to hurt ourselves, for in the latter instance none can complain, though they may blame us; but in the former they have a right not only to blame but to complain and to condemn us. And therefore a particular charge is given us not to be heedless how other men may be affected by our conduct, but to consider well the consequences, and to do nothing but what good-will and friendship dictates. "Look not every man on his own things, "but every man also on the things of others; "and be kind one to another, doing good "unto all men. And let this mind be in "you which was also in Christ Jesus, who "went about doing good." To be then of the flock of Christ it is requisite that we be harmless in our words and actions, and that therefore we have that active benevolence which shall not only make us ready to serve mankind but also make us *study* to avoid doing them any harm.

3. Another disposition in sheep is meekness, and meekness is a characteristic of the Christian temper; for our Lord was meek and lowly of heart; and requires that we "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith
" we

“we are called; with all lowliness and
 “meekness; with long-suffering, forbearing
 “one another in love—that we avenge not
 “ourselves, but give place unto wrath:” and
 therefore the man of a fierce and angry spirit
 cannot, till he has subdued that spirit, become
 a true disciple of Christ; for there is a dis-
 cordance between his mind and that of Christ.
 The precepts and example of the one agree
 not with the temper and disposition of the
 other, and consequently cannot be followed
 by him. In meditation, indeed, he may ap-
 prove, but in practice he is averse to them, and
 in the hour of trial deserts them. The ge-
 nius of the gospel is to *save*, and not to *de-*
stroy; but the man who is prone to anger is
 often hurried on by a destructive rage that
 would consume all before it. Blinded with
 passion, he would, if it were possible for
 him, call down fire from heaven to destroy
 his enemies; not knowing what spirit he is
 of, not knowing that the spirit of revenge is
 the spirit of the devil, and that to bear pro-
 vocations with an undisturbed mind and to
 forgive them, is to be superior to them, and
 to be like God himself, and like the Lamb
 of God, who, when he was reviled, reviled
 not again. They, then, cannot be more than

nominal disciples of Christ, who retain a temper incompatible with imitating and obeying him. To be real disciples of Christ, we must imbibe his spirit, and imitate the meekness of sheep, and not the rage of a lion. And this is so far from rendering men mean and contemptible, that it really dignifies and ennobles them; for the angry man is a slave to those passions which the meek man controuls and governs, and thereby greatly recommends himself not only to the favor of his God, but to the esteem of all sensible men.

4. A fourth property of sheep is that they are gentle, and gentleness must distinguish the flock of Christ. There are some men who though not of an irascible temper, are yet very rough and disagreeable in their manners, mistaking a disgusting bluntness for honesty. Now though it may appear to some that this is rather a blemish than a sin, a want of delicacy more than a want of virtue; yet I will affirm that it is quite foreign to the religion of Jesus, which, being designed to promote our happiness, not only as rational and immortal but as social beings, requires us to cultivate those dispositions which conciliate and win the affections, to be *gentle, affable, and courte-*

ous ; to become all things to all men for their good, i. e. to give way with complaisance in indifferent matters, and endeavour to oblige as far as is consistent with our duty to God ; and even in the most important affairs not to appear regardless of the will of others ; but when we are obliged to act contrary to their inclinations, to shew that we do it from principles of duty, and not from indifference to them. And this creates good-will and friendship among men, and is highly conducive to that state of social happiness which Christ came to begin on earth, that he might qualify us for the society of just men made perfect in heaven. Whereas a rough and turbulent, peevish or uncivil behaviour, dissolving the social bond that should subsist between men, operates directly contrary to Christianity ; so that it may truly be said that the want of good manners is an argument of the want of a Christian spirit, which contains the essence of good breeding, for though it does not always appear with the artificial polish of a polite education, which is subject to tarnish by the sudden gust of passion, yet it gives the polish of a gentle mind, which is always calm, bright, and pure.

5. Patience likewise, which is natural to sheep,

sheep, is required in the disciples of Christ; "in your patience possess ye your souls," i. e. suffer not yourselves to be affected beyond the bounds of reason by any afflictions ye endure, however brought on, knowing this, that nothing can happen to you without the permission of God, and if he suffer you to fall into distress, it is to try and exercise your virtue, and to wean your hearts from the world, that you may come forth from the furnace of affliction purified even as silver is pure, for all things work together for the good of them that believe. Let patience have her perfect work, and inure you to an entire submission to the divine dispensations; assured that however dark and intricate the ways of Providence may appear to human reason, which scans but a part of them, yet they are most wise and best on the whole. Whoever would be a Christian, must learn to be patient; for the impatient are not only often injurious to man, but impious to God. By their impatience they condemn the providence of their Maker, and renounce the example of their Redeemer. The most active zeal without patience is often frustrated; in the service of Christ it is always so: for his religion, which leads to moral perfection, cannot be pro-

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moted but by the exercise of all moral virtues, of which patience is a capital one. To suffer our zeal to betray us into acts of violence for the cause of Christ, is to destroy what we would support. To be offended when tribulation ariseth on account of the word, is to extinguish our zeal, and apostatize from the faith.—And as patience is so necessary a virtue in a Christian, we may be sure that Providence will always afford us opportunities of exercising ourselves therein one way or other ; that, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, we may run the race he hath set before us, knowing that after we have done his will on earth, we shall receive his promise in heaven.

Lastly : The tractable nature of sheep, who, though apt to stray, yet soon return at the shepherd's call, fitly represents the ready disposition to obey the voice of Christ which is found in his true disciples. Perfection is not the character of any man. All have more or less erred and strayed like lost sheep. But the sheep of Christ do it not from stubbornness of heart, but from that pitiable heedlessness which is incident to human nature ; and they no sooner hear the voice of their Shepherd than they obey his call, are no sooner sensible
of

of their error than they correct it. If anger surprize them, in their daily meditations they recollect their duty, and let not the sun go down on their wrath. And so in every other instance wherein they wander from the path prescribed them, they soon return to it again. But they who offend premeditately, and are of that stubborn temper which will not be reformed, want the mark of Christ's seal, and cannot be reckoned among the number of his flock.

We have now gone over some of those virtues which characterize the sheep of Christ: And it behoves us to consider whether we possess them, and whether we are obedient to Christ, as the Great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. On this depends our being finally gathered into his fold, when he will separate his own sheep from all others; when they who have subdued their carnal minds, and cultivated a humane and pious disposition, who love and reverence him, delight in his word and in doing his will, shall be acknowledged by him, and rewarded as faithful disciples; whilst those who have rejected the controul of his authority, who have sought only sensual gratifications, and not virtuous improvement, who have made passion, and

not reason and religion their law, shall be disowned by him.

It is not, however, our part to pronounce any sentence on individuals, but only to abide by general terms; for in this world it is not always easy to discern who are the true sheep of Christ. Amidst his visible flock, which consists of the whole catholic Church, (of all the professors of Christianity) many whom we may deem destitute of every sign of grace, may yet belong to his invisible church: whilst others, whose specious conduct seems to exhibit genuine marks of Christianity, may appear to him to whom all hearts are open, void of every Christian principle. It is not then for us to judge and condemn others, but to examine, correct and improve ourselves: Assured of this, that if by the sincere practice of all Christian virtues, we render ourselves worthy to be acknowledged by Christ, he, as the good Shepherd that knoweth his own, will take us to himself, that where he is there we may be also.

SERMON

S E R M O N IX.

ON THE DANGER AND ILL CONSEQUENCES OF WASTING OUR TIME.

1 Cor. vii. 29.

BUT THIS I SAY BRETHREN, THE TIME IS SHORT.

AFTER this observation, the Apostle proceeds to exhort the Corinthians to make the best use of their time, by employing as much of it as possible to their spritual concerns: and that they might have the more leifure for this, he would not have them enthrawl themselves in any unnecessary business—for time, or human life is short.

To employ our time properly is the great art of life; an art which one would think must have been long ago discovered and universally practised. It is indeed better known than followed. For, strange as it may appear, when we consider the matter speculatively, yet so we find it in fact, that mankind do not in general employ their time to those purposes which their true interest and happiness require.

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Though sensible that they are here in a state of probation, as rational creatures, and have to qualify themselves for heaven, by acquiring various virtues and graces before they can enjoy it, yet one part of mankind give themselves up to an idle life, useless to themselves and others; and being oppressed with a tedium, endeavour to expel it by vain and frivolous amusements, or by dissipation and unworthy pleasures. Others, immersed in secular cares, and wholly engrossed in worldly business, consider each moment as lost which they cannot turn to some temporal advantage; and complain when they are disengaged that time hangs heavy on their hands. How strange that such short-lived beings should make such complaints, and aim only to shorten the apparent length of their days; and that which affords them the greatest pleasure either in their amusements or their more serious occupations, is that they felt not the weight of time, and that the fleeting moments passed unperceived. But what a contradiction is man! he dreads as the worst of evils the end of his days, and yet considers the burden of time as an almost equal evil, which he is continually endeavouring to shake off—he would live for ever, and yet

yet finds *time* irksome to him, which he knows not how to resign, nor how to enjoy.

But time, whose value we so unjustly estimate, is necessary for the working out our salvation. Yet we idly waste it without regret, which is a crime; or we consume it on earthly things only, which is a folly. But let us employ the time which God gives us; and because it is short, let us employ it to the best purposes.

1. Let us learn its *value*, and we shall not waste it.

2. Let us learn its *use*, and we shall rightly employ it; avoiding both the dangers of an idle life, and the inconveniencies of a busy one.

1. Let us consider the value of time. Whatever advantages we propose to ourselves, time is necessary for the accomplishment of them; and therefore it is in fact invaluable to us, as without it all things else vanish from us. Be our views what they may, unless we have time to prepare ourselves for them, we cannot hope to succeed; and in many things it is absolutely impossible that we should, nay in all that is really valuable and is not foreign from ourselves, we cannot. Now whether our chief aim be to acquire wealth,

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wealth, fame, or honours; to distinguish ourselves in the walks of science, or to attain eminence in the liberal arts; or whatever it be we aim at, time is requisite for the execution of our schemes and the completion of our wishes. How many undertakings of the greatest importance have proved abortive for want of time to ripen and mature them, which had they been begun sooner would have been crowned with success! And how common is the complaint of the want of time to begin and perfect such and such things, which nevertheless are very desirable! Hence the folly and pernicious consequences of letting time pass unimproved and neglected.

Now if time be so requisite for acquiring temporal things, it must be equally so for obtaining things eternal, and preparing ourselves for heaven. In this state of probation, unless we exercise and improve ourselves in all holiness and godliness, and acquire the proper dispositions to recommend ourselves to God's favour, and qualify us for the enjoyment of divine things, we shall not be hereafter received into heaven. And yet this is a matter of infinite importance to every man. Heaven and hell are before him—future misery

tery and eternal happiness, in comparison of which all temporal things dwindle into nothing. And to avoid the one and prepare for the other is not the work of a moment. To weed the heart of bad propensities, to root out vicious passions, to repent of past transgressions, and bring forth the fruits of repentance, to implant and nourish and bring to perfection virtuous and holy principles, to form the mind to love and obey God, to imitate the example of Christ, till we have imbibed his spirit—this is a work of time; but it is a work necessary to fit us for eternity. How valuable then must our time be, on the right use of which so much depends! and how great is the folly of idly wasting it away!

2. But the folly of misapplying our time appears still greater when we consider the shortness of human life. Were our existence in this world to continue for a great length of time, the loss of a few years might appear inconsiderable, and we might hope to make up for them by properly and diligently employing what remains. But alas, what is our life, it is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little while and vanishes away. What

part

part then of this small point of our existence can we afford to lose? And when there is retrenched from it what is necessarily given to the care of our bodies, to the refreshment of sleep, to our temporal affairs, to unexpected interruptions, and to society, how small a portion remains for reflection and meditation, for prayer and devout communion with God, in order to prepare for eternity! What absurdity then is it to complain of time as a burden! What madness to have recourse to a thousand artifices to shorten its apparent length! Does the criminal who is condemned to die, complain of the tedious length of the hours between his sentence and execution? does he try by frivolous amusements to get rid of the few precious moments that remain to him? And is there such a difference between the sentence of man and of God, who hath condemned all mankind to death, that we should waste away the hours of our respite, in idle, vain, and childish things. It is possible for the criminal to escape a human sentence, friends may intercede for him, or he may break out of prison by force, or escape by fraud. But no intercession, no power, no art, can save us from the judgment of God. The arrest of death

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is inevitable, and we must die, and that soon. You who are now in the bloom of youth, shall be quickly cut down like the grass, and your place here shall know you no more for ever.—Is there then too much time to prepare for death, that we should waste any of it away? or is it wise to rush into eternity like the thoughtless horse into battle?

3. But further. To the shortness of human life, may be added the uncertainty of its duration. Though at the longest, it is but a span long, yet that span may be contracted. We are not sure of a day. From the hour our first parents transgressed the commands of God, death received a commission against them and their offspring; and we ourselves have by innumerable offences provoked the justice of Heaven, so that every moment our lives hang in doubtful suspense, and our present time is but a respite, during God's pleasure, of the sentence denounced against us. The time we live is then an act of mercy, each moment we breathe is a fresh gift of grace, and highly precious. To spend this time on things of no importance to us, is to abuse the goodness that grants it, is to waste away a favour to which we have no claim, and which cannot last long, but which is
merci-

mercifully vouchsafed us that we may work out our salvation. To waste this time in a vain, idle manner, is a criminal folly, it is trampling on the forbearance of God, and ruining ourselves.

But you will say, are no relaxations and innocent amusements allowable? Yes, they are allowable: But do not let your relaxations engage your chief attention, for that is to confer on them the importance of serious business.—Neither let follies be ranked among innocent amusements. A little time is sufficient for relaxation, and when the proper business of the day is rightly discharged, but little will be left for it. When you have arranged your domestic concerns, and seen that all things are properly executed—when you have performed the necessary business of your different occupations—when you have attended to the education of your children, heard them read the word of God, and instructed them in its importance—when you have discharged the offices of charity, visiting the fatherless and sick, and administering them relief—when you have spent some time in your closet, in meditation and prayer, what great portion can remain for relaxation? And shall all or any of these duties be neglected,
under

under the idea of relaxation? Or can any amusement be innocent that is followed at the expence of a duty? First do your work before you think of relaxation.

We consider as a fool the man who squanders away in insignificant and useless things, till he is reduced to beggary, a valuable estate, which he is to occupy for a few years only, but during which time he may improve it, and save a fortune. But time is to us that valuable inheritance to which we are born heirs to possess it for a little while, and during which short period we may provide for eternity. How unworthy and foolish then to spend in earthly trifles *that* which if properly disposed of will purchase treasures in heaven; which would raise us to the lasting honour of the blessed, to live for ever with Christ our Redeemer in his kingdom of happiness. Yet what is the chief employment of men? what are they engaged in? do they study to improve their mind, to store it with useful knowledge, to acquire the graces of the Christian spirit, and form their souls by habits of virtue and piety? Do they endeavour to improve their time by employing it in such a manner as becomes the candidates for heaven, and as shall recommend them

them to the divine favour? Alas! we cannot say they do. We see them foolishly misapply their time, and we often pity and blame them for it. We wonder how any people of fortune, who we think have so much leisure to prepare for eternity, should employ themselves about *nothings*, or what is worse, pernicious amusements. We wonder how others should be so eager in the pursuit of honours and wealth, as if the business of this life demanded their only or chief attention: and we blame them for giving that undue attention to what we perceive to be of small moment, in comparison of their eternal concerns. But why do we perceive and blame this in them? Because, perhaps, our inclinations do not attach us to the same things, and therefore we discern their little importance. We do not, perhaps, amuse away our time on the same trifles as they do, our likings may be different. But is there not something else, equally as trivial, if impartially considered, that engrosses us too much? for not only the too eager pursuit of pleasure, wealth, and ambition, but even of the arts and sciences, and philosophical researches, may become a snare to us. They may occupy the mind, to the exclusion of

greater

greater views, and more interesting concerns. When therefore we pity others for wasting their time, in what we call follies, we should each of us ask ourselves this question, How have I employed my time? Have I made that my chief care which is my chief work? Has the time I have given to my different pursuits been apportioned according to their different merits? Has religion had its just share of those hours which Heaven bestowed upon me, and has all my time been spent according to the will of God; and have I prepared myself for that awful change, which I must soon undergo? These are questions which might excite our reflection, and teach us the value of time.

4. But its great value seems to increase from this further consideration, viz. that when it is once past, it is wholly irrecoverable. Where are the years we have lived? Can we call them back? Not a moment of them. They are as much out of our power as the time before we were born. And yet not one day of our appointed time, but what had its particular duties allotted to it for us to fulfil in this our probation. And if we have let any day pass without discharging its duties, we must be accountable for it. Can you recal
 Vol II. M yesterday?

yesterday? No: Neither can you do to-day the duties of yesterday. What you do to-day, belongs to to-day, and what you have neglected yesterday can never be recovered; consequently the blessings annexed to the proper use of yesterday, are lost also. It is irrecoverable too in another sense. Every day we ought to grow in grace, and make farther advances towards Christian perfection. Now we cannot by our utmost endeavours, make up for lost time in this respect, because we ought *always* to use our utmost endeavours to grow in grace; and therefore by how much time we neglect which we may apply to this purpose, by so much we fall short of what we may attain to.—As we conclude, that because we die but once, therefore we ought to die well; so we may conclude, that as we can live the same day but once, therefore we ought to live each day well. And they who neglect to improve the present, will deplore the loss of it, when not a moment can be recovered. How would Dives, when he lifted up his eyes in hell, have given all the riches he ever possessed, to recover, if possible, a small part of that time to work out his salvation, which he had consumed in riotous living, to his destruction. And so at the hour of death,

when

when the terrors of God's judgments stares them in their face, the dissolute and dissipated will implore, but in vain, time for repentance. The justice of God will cut short their days, and the time, which they know not how to employ, and which now hangs heavy on their hands, will be taken from them for ever.

IF then the waste of our time, which is so *short*, so uncertain, and so irreparable, be so fatal;—if our whole life be not more than sufficient for the one thing needful, viz. to work out our salvation; how careful ought we to be of each moment, and to employ it according to the will of God! Our days and years are in his hands, shall we provoke him to cut them short? In his book is noted the use we make of our time, and for every moment we have spent in idle words and works, we must give an account. How soon we may be called to this account, we know not; but this we know, it cannot be long,—the day is far spent, the night is at hand. Alas! if our days have hitherto been spent in vanity, in trifles, or what is worse, in sinful pleasures—shall we still go on in this mad career? no: Let us seriously apply the remainder of our life, to that great purpose for which life was given

us.—Let this be our constant aim, viz. to grow in grace: For this end, let the morning and the evening be witness of our devotions; let the earnestness of our prayers for the increase of our faith, and the perfecting of our obedience, engage the favour of our God and Redeemer. And by constantly regulating all our pursuits, whether of business, study, or amusements, by a strict regard to the will of God, let us sanctify them, and render them subservient to our great work. So, whenever our awful change shall come, whether sooner or later, we shall not be surprised, nor unprepared.

SERMON

S E R M O N X.

ON THE TRINITY.

I John v. 7.

FOR THERE ARE THREE THAT BEAR WITNESS IN
HEAVEN, THE FATHER, THE WORD, AND THE
HOLY GHOST ; AND THESE THREE ARE ONE.

ὅτι τρεῖς εἰαν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ ὁρατῷ, ὁ πατήρ, ὁ
Λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι.

IN the fourth chapter of this Epistle, the
Apostle informs those to whom he wrote,
that faith in Jesus Christ, as the Son of God,
and Saviour of the world, is productive of
love to mankind, and that therefore, whoever
was void of affection for his fellow creatures,
could not be actuated by faith ; because faith
in Christ *implies* the *love* of God, and the love
of God *disposes* us to *keep* his commandments ;

M 3 and

and this commandment have we from God, that he who *loveth him*, love his brother also.

In the fifth chapter he continues this argument, shewing that whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God, and consequently entertains a brotherly love and affection for all who are born of God also, i. e. for all true Christians. And this disposition of mind, the Apostle makes the test, whereby the sincerity of our faith, and love for God may be known.

“ Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the
 “ Christ, is born of God.—Whatsoever is
 “ born of God overcometh the world.—And
 “ this is the victory that overcometh the
 “ world, even our faith.” Whosoever over-
 cometh the world, finds that the command-
 ments of God are not grievous; and as love
 to his brethren is one of those command-
 ments, he is far from being found deficient
 in his observance of it; therefore every one
 that believeth that Jesus is the Christ, loves
 his brethren.

The spirit and maxims of the world might induce us to hate some of our brethren. A real, or an imaginary injury, might provoke us to revenge; or a thousand instances may occur wherein our fellow-creatures, appearing

as obstacles to our worldly views, may diminish our good-will towards them. But the true believer, having overcome the world, is not diverted by any of its enjoyments, or by the desire of them, from entertaining that love and benevolence for all his brethren, which is the characteristic temper of Christianity. This is what those who deny that Jesus is the Son of God cannot do ; for their minds are estranged from those virtues which are required in the true believer. They are under the influence and power of the world. Revenge, malice, hatred, envy, wrath, and such like dispositions, prevail in them, and ever will, till they are regenerated. “ For who is he that overcometh the
“ world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the
“ Son of God ? ” This is he that “ came by
“ water and blood ; ” not *by water only*, wherein he was baptized, and shewed the necessity of a pure and holy life, *but by water and blood*, which he shed for the expiation of the sins of mankind. He came by water, which symbolically represented the purification of the soul by regeneration : And he came by blood, the blood which he shed upon the cross, as a sacrifice and atonement for the sins of the world, agreeable to the prophecies concerning the Messiah : “ He was

“wounded for our transgressions, he was
“bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement
“of our peace was upon him, and with his
“stripes we are healed. And it is the Spirit
“that beareth witness, because the Spirit is
“truth.” The Spirit testifies that Jesus Christ
is the Son of God. “For there are three
“that bear witness in earth, the spirit,
“and the water, and the blood, and these
“three agree in one;” i. e. the spirit bears
witness to the truth of this doctrine, and the
sincerity of our faith, by the extraordinary
power which is conferred on us to work mi-
racles. The water in baptism bears witness, or
is a symbol of the purity of the religion of
Jesus; and the blood, which is represented in
the Lord’s Supper, bears witness, or is a sym-
bol of the atonement which he made for our
sins, and of our being accepted by God
through him.—All harmoniously agreeing in
this, the salvation of our souls, through Je-
sus Christ, who is the divine, the complete,
the only Saviour of the world.—And as there
are three on earth that testify this truth, so like-
wise “there are three that bear witness in
“heaven; the Father, the Word, and
“the Holy Ghost, and these three are
“one.” The Father, who testified that Jesus
Christ

Christ was his Son, at his baptism, and at his transfiguration, when a voice came from heaven, saying, "this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The Word, who testified of himself on many occasions whilst he was on earth; and again with greater solemnity after his ascension into heaven, sitting at the right hand of the Father, and having all power and dominion subject to him. And the Holy Ghost beareth witness, whose testimony was chiefly added after Christ's glorification.—Thus as there are three on earth that bear witness to Christ's being the Son of God; and as they agree in one thing, namely, the salvation of our souls through him; so there are three in heaven likewise who bear witness to this truth, and these three *are one*: The divinity of Jesus Christ is testified both on earth and in heaven.—The design of the Apostle seems to be, first to prove that whosoever believeth that Christ is the Son of God, overcometh the world, and consequently loves his brethren Secondly, to shew the foundation of our faith in believing Christ to be the Son of God, viz. the testimony of God himself, which is unanswerable; for, says he, "if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is
" greater."

"greater." Men are fallible, and yet we give credit to their testimony in numberless instances. God is infallible, and therefore to be implicitly believed.

Having unfolded what appears to me to be the Apostle's chief scope in this chapter, I shall proceed to consider the particular doctrine contained in the text; and that is the triune nature of God: For "there are three that bear witness in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one." — I shall consider it

First, as a revealed doctrine; and

Secondly, endeavour to shew its importance.

1. That it is a revealed doctrine appears from the words of the text. For the Apostles, whom the Spirit guided into all truth, advanced no doctrine from themselves. And they never intruded their own opinions upon mankind, as essential articles of faith. Nor indeed were they under any temptation to do so: for having been fully instructed by our Saviour, or guided into the truth by the extraordinary illuminations of the Spirit, they were never in any doubt concerning any doctrine whatever; and therefore could determine with certainty upon all that was necessary

sary for mankind to believe, and consequently would advance nothing more. For as under the guidance of the Spirit they could not be mistaken themselves, so neither would they deceive others, by teaching them what they were not authorized to teach by God; since no man can be more mistaken, than when he delivers his own opinions for divine revelations. Now as the inspiration of the Apostles rendered it impossible that they could be mistaken in any point of doctrine; and as the same inspiration excludes every idea that they should have been so malicious as wilfully to deceive mankind, (for if they had, they surely could not have been guided by the Spirit of God) it follows that the doctrines which they have advanced are true. The doctrine of the Trinity therefore is true, because the Apostles have advanced it. The text which I have chosen, is not the only passage in the scriptures whence the doctrine of the Trinity is collected. If it were, the oppugners of our faith might charge it as an interpolation of some copyist; especially the words, *and these three are one*; or else endeavour to explain away the sense of them. But there are several passages in the Old Testament, and many in the New, where

where this doctrine is taught; I shall select two or three from the New Testament. First, creation, which is a divine work, is ascribed to Jesus Christ. "By him were created all things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible. All things were created by him, and for him."* The divine attribute of searching the heart, is attributed to him in the Revelations.† "Write these things, saith the Son of God—I am he who searcheth the hearts." Honour and worship, which are due only to the divine Being, (for it is written, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve") are ascribed unto Jesus as distinct from the Father—therefore he was God as well as Man. "That all men may honour the Son, even as they honour the Father."‡ And again, "worship him all ye Angels."—The power of forgiving sins, which belongs only to God, belongs to him. Thus he himself said to the sick of the palsy, "Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee."—Nay he is expressly said to be God, "Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever-

* Col. i. 16. † ii. 18, 23. ‡ John v. 23.

"more,

“ more ;” * and in another place, “ God was
 “ manifest in the flesh.†” Hence the divinity
 of Christ is manifestly taught in the scrip-
 tures. And so likewise is that of the Holy
 Spirit, “ who searcheth all things, yea the deep
 “ things of God.” But yet these three are
 distinct, though united. Hence our Saviour
 says to his disciples, “ I will pray the Father,
 “ and he will send the Comforter unto you ;”
 which shews that they were three distinct
 persons ; but yet there was an union subsisting
 between them, for these three are one, one in
 the Godhead ; hence “ to us there is but one
 “ God.”—From the passages which I have
 quoted, it will follow, that no one can, with
 propriety, allow the divine authority of the
 scriptures, and yet deny the doctrine of the
 Trinity. But this absurdity are the Arians
 guilty of. They say the scriptures are true,
 and yet deny what the scriptures advance.
 They make our Saviour to be the greatest of
 all beings, next to God ; saying that he does
 not possess the fulness of the divine essence,
 but is a little lower than God.—A little
 lower than God, is a great deal of non-
 sense ; for whatever is lower, or less than an

* Rom. ix. 5.

† 1 Tim. iii. 16.

infinite Being must be infinitely lower, for, strictly speaking, there can be no gradations in infinity. Men may be made a little lower than angels, but all things that are made, must be finite; and consequently infinitely lower than the infinite God.

It is no sufficient argument for denying the Trinity, to say that we cannot comprehend it; for if it were, we might also deny the being of a God. His eternal existence, his ubiquity, and all his attributes infinitely exceed the limits of our finite comprehension. We cannot find out the Almighty to perfection. And not only we cannot, but neither can any created being in the universe; because all derived beings must be less than the fountain of existence from whence they derive their being. As a part cannot contain the whole, so no finite creature, not angels nor arch-angels can form adequate conceptions of, or comprehend, the infinite God. "No man knoweth the Father," says our Saviour, "but the Son--" "I and my Father are one. I am in the Father, and the Father in me." Our Saviour therefore, who was God as well as man, knew the Father; and he knew the Father because he was God, "God over all, blessed for ever--more." So likewise the Holy Ghost is God,
 who

who proceeds from the Father and the Son. For the Holy Ghost being the Spirit of God, necessarily proceeds from the Father and the Son, who are God. Now to all these persons, do the scriptures attribute different offices; and speak of them in such a manner, as to shew that they are distinct from each other, and yet not divided in essence, but are one God. And therefore though there is one God and Father of all, and one Lord Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and one Holy Ghost, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, yet they are not three gods, but one God: and therefore, as the Apostle says, "to us there is but one God." This is plainly revealed, and therefore ought to be received with all humility. But if any man will deny the possibility of the triune nature of God, he must take upon him to say that he himself is perfectly well acquainted with the nature of the Deity, and the manner in which he subsists, and that from this knowledge he is assured, that a triune nature is incompatible with the unity of the Deity.—But let him consider whether arrogating to himself such knowledge be not somewhat more than presumption: Let him consider whether it be not blasphemy, to re-
duce

duce the infinite nature of God to the measure of man's shallow capacity. The scriptures have plainly taught the doctrine of the Trinity; and that is warrant sufficient for any Christian to believe it. And since the word of God teaches it, he that denies it is surely more absurd than he that believes it. He that believes it upon God's word, believes reasonably, because reason teaches that whatsoever God reveals we should believe, though it may appear mysterious to us. And as the doctrine of the Trinity involves no contradiction, the most strenuous asserters of Arianism cannot more reasonably deny it upon the ground of its incomprehensibility, than they can deny the creation of the world. It surely implies no contradiction to say that in the Deity there are three distinct persons of one essence, so subsisting together as to form one God. This is no contradiction, though to human intellect it is inconceivable. But it is not more so than to create something out of nothing, both are equally inconceivable; yet the latter is generally allowed, even by those who deny the former. For my part, I firmly believe them both, upon the authority of the holy scriptures. But I do not therefore look upon myself as obliged to explain either.

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And were I to attempt to do it, I should be equally as imprudent in endeavouring to extend *my* comprehension to the measure of the Deity, as they are who want to reduce the nature of the Deity to the measure of their own comprehension.

I shall therefore proceed to consider, in the second place, the importance of the doctrine of the Trinity.

1. It is important, as it implies the infinite excellency of our Saviour, and consequently that his blood was a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. For if our Saviour had not been God as well as man, his death never could have atoned for the sins of mankind; for what satisfaction can a creature make to his Creator? "None
" can by any means redeem his brother, nor
" give to God a ransom for him; for the
" redemption of their soul is precious."
Were our Lord a created being, and God had required of him to suffer for mankind, it would, undoubtedly, have been his duty to have submitted to it. But our natural notions of the divine justice, will not permit us to think that he will appoint one creature to suffer for the offences of another. And as there could be no extraordinary merit in our Saviour's

suffering, by the arbitrary appointment of God, if he had been a creature, since it would then have been no more than his duty; so he could never thereby have made an atonement for the sins of others. Again, the sufferings of our Saviour were in this world only, and consequently temporal, and therefore would not have been sufficient to have removed from mankind the condemnation to eternal punishment if he had not been a divine person. It was his divinity that gave sufficiency to his atonement for us; and his *voluntarily* offering himself a sacrifice for sin, that rendered his death meritorious. “God
“ was in Christ reconciling the world unto
“ himself; and therefore the blood of Jesus
“ cleanseth us from all sin; but he had power
“ to lay down his life, and power to take it
“ up; and he willingly laid down his life.”
And, as by his divinity he became a sufficient sacrifice for sin, so likewise it is his divinity that invests him with full power to forgive sins; for who can forgive sins but God? Thus the doctrine of the Trinity is an important article in the Christian religion, as it builds the remission of sin upon a sure foundation, even upon Christ’s infinite power and merits; for through him we have full
access

access unto the Father. The whole of the argument may be stated as follows :

If Christ, the Son of God, be not divine, then he must be a creature.

A creature cannot make satisfaction for sin to God his Creator.

But Christ, the Son of God, hath made satisfaction to God, for the sins of the world, therefore he is divine.

Secondly. The doctrine of the Trinity is important with regard to the Holy Ghost. The office of the Holy Ghost is to purify our carnal nature, and sanctify our hearts ; to renew in us the image of God, after which Adam was created, even the image of holiness. Now this is the work of Omnipotence. This is, says the Apostle Paul, " the glorious administration of the Spirit ;" and then he adds, " the Lord is that Spirit."* The same reasons which require that Jesus Christ should be God as well as man, to atone for the sins of mankind, may be applied with equal force to prove that the Holy Ghost must be God likewise, to sanctify mankind. For what creature can make any thing holy in the sight of God, who chargeth his very angels with

* 2 Cor. iii. 17.

folly; i. e. who are in comparison with him, so imperfect that their wisdom appears folly? Every creature must necessarily appear imperfect in comparison with God. It is the Spirit of God only, that can, by regenerating us, beget us anew unto a lively hope; and by receiving of which Spirit unto adoption, *we* are enabled to cry, *Abba*, Father. It is the "Spirit that quickeneth," says St. Paul. Now this Spirit proceeds both from the Father and the Son, as appears from many passages of scripture. And indeed the same works which are in some places attributed to the Son and Spirit, are in others attributed to God; by which we are to understand that the Son and Spirit are God. "The Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God.*" "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?†" "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts.‡" "Now the Lord is that Spirit.||" The arguments for the divinity of the Holy Ghost may be reduced to a short compass. God only can sanctify;

* 1 Cor. ii. 10. † 1 Cor. iii. 16. ‡ Gal iv. 6.

|| 2 Cor. iii. 17.

Yet the Holy Ghost sanctifies,
Therefore, the Holy Ghost is God.

Of such importance is the doctrine of the Trinity, that the Christian religion depends upon it. Our redemption and sanctification are involved in it. It is therefore a doctrine replete with joy to the true believer. In what a strong light does it shew the love of God to mankind? That the blessed Trinity should undertake the cause of sinful man! that the first Person in it should agree to receive a vicarious satisfaction—that the second should consent to give it—and that the third should sanctify us and abide with us, is matter of equal wonder and consolation. What confidence does not this afford to the pious Christian, who sees mercy embracing him on every side! who sees his God in his Redeemer. What a door of grace does it open to the sinner, who may now draw near to God, confident that his sins are forgiven, knowing that the blood of the Son of God was a price of such infinite value as to pay the ransom for all mankind! What an assurance does it afford him that the Father will accept him through the Son, since the Son, who died for him, is one with the Father! What a sure earnest of his salvation does a con-

verted sinner receive, who, sensible that his conversion was wrought by the agency of the Spirit, knows it to be the work of God! Blessed, for ever blessed be God, who has revealed this mystery of his nature for our consolation! May he by the word of his grace confirm our faith, "that we may have an inheritance among them that are sanctified!"

Now, my brethren, as we who are members of the church of England, believe the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, let us be careful not to disgrace our faith by our practice. As we believe that we are redeemed by the Son of God, so let us pay that deference to him which is due to so great a Master and Benefactor. Let his precepts appear in our practice, and let us acknowledge his divinity in our deeds as well as words. As we believe that we are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, let us be careful never to resist his influences, knowing that whosoever resisteth these, resisteth God. Let us hold fast the profession and practice of our faith, nothing wavering, for these must unite in us, or we shall lose the benefit of Christ's death; for it will avail us little in the great day of judgment, that our profession has been *orthodox*, if our lives and conversation have been *heterodox*.

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Be it our principal care, then, to acknowledge the blessed Trinity with our lips, to worship them in our hearts, and so to live here that we may not be disowned by them hereafter. Let the scorner, the false pretender to wisdom, deal out his witticisms against our faith. But be it our business to preserve it in sincerity and a good conscience, and to adorn it by a holy life. This, better than subtle arguments, will gain us the esteem of the truly wise, and secure to us the approbation of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

SERMON

Be it our principal care, then, to acknow-
ledge the blessed Trinity with our lips, to
worship them in our hearts, and to live
here that we may not be disowned by them
hereafter. Let the Father, the Son, and
the Holy Ghost, be our wisdom, our strength,
our comfort, our joy, our peace, our life,
our all. But be it our business to
give it a in sincerity and a good conscience,
and to adorn it by a holy life. This, better
than subtle arguments, will gain us the
reign of the truly wise, and secure to us the
appropriation of the Father, Son and Holy
Ghost.

SERMON

S E R M O N XL

ON THE PARABLE OF THE IMPORTUNATE WIDOW.

Luke xviii. 1.

AND HE SPOKE A PARABLE UNTO THEM, TO THIS
 END, THAT MEN OUGHT ALWAYS TO PRAY, AND
 NOT TO FAINT.

THE human mind is apt to sink into despondency under the pressure of afflictions, which have long continued: the reason is, mens passions render them impatient, and they begin to doubt the promises of God, if they are not *immediately* fulfilled; not considering that God, who governs himself by infinite wisdom, neither hastens any event before, nor defers it beyond its proper season, but waits for the fulness of time; and when that is come executes his purposes and ful-

fils

fuls his promises.—Should it be asked, to what end does prayer tend, if the time of God's fulfilling his promises be thus determined? I answer that the seasons of divine favour depend oftentimes not so much upon a certain series of days or years, as upon circumstances. For instance, when the end for which afflictions are sent is accomplished, then is the proper time for removing them: *sooner* would have defeated that end; *later* would have protracted mercy unnecessarily. But now fervent prayer may be, and often is, very conducive to the promotion of that end; and thereby shortens the period of our sufferings. Nay, at all times perseverance in prayer is better than despondency; the one is a duty replete with piety, the other implies a doubt of the divine goodness and veracity. We ought therefore always to pray, and not to faint, for God is faithful in all things. We ought never to suffer our desire for the accomplishment of any of his promises to diminish our confidence in him, but rather with devout importunity look up to him for the fulfilment thereof. To encourage us to do this our Saviour delivered the following parable. “There was in a city a judge who
“neither feared God, nor regarded man. And
“there

“ there was a widow in that city, and she
 “ came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine
 “ adversary. And he would not for a while:
 “ but afterwards he said within himself,
 “ though I fear not God nor regard man,
 “ yet because this widow troubleth me, I
 “ will avenge her, lest by her continual com-
 “ ing she weary me. And the Lord said,
 “ hear what the *unjust* judge saith: And
 “ shall not God avenge his own elect, which
 “ cry day and night unto him, though he
 “ bear long with them? I tell you that he
 “ will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless
 “ when the Son of man cometh, shall he
 “ find faith on earth?” Previous to his de-
 livering this parable our Lord had just been
 foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and
 the Jews, who were the great enemies of the
 Christians, persecuting them in all parts of
 the world, but particularly in Judea. Their
 destruction, therefore, and causing them to
 cease as a political body was avenging his
 elect, and is frequently foretold by the ex-
 pression of “ the coming of the Son of Man
 “ upon earth.” To encourage the Christians,
 therefore, that they might not faint under the
 persecutions of the Jews, nor imagine that
 because the judgments denounced against
 them

them were not immediately executed, therefore they never would, our Lord subjoined the parable which you have just heard; a parable which beautifully expresses the successful effects of persevering prayer to God. An *unjust* judge, actuated by no sense of duty, without the fear of God; influenced by no sense of shame, but regardless of man, was so wrought upon by the importunity of a widow, whose repetitions of her wrongs, whose tears and complaints so troubled him that he resolved to do her justice. Could an *unjust* judge, an impious, shameless fellow, be induced to do this? How much more then will God, who is *infinitely just*, avenge the wrongs of his elect—who is infinitely compassionate, hear their complaints? “I tell you that he will avenge them speedily, or suddenly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on earth?” Will not the love of many have waxed cold? and will it be generally believed that these judgments are executed by him?

This parable, then, related, as we see, more particularly to great bodies of men, than to individuals—to the Christians in general on the one hand, who at that time were under great oppressions; and to the Jews on the other, who

who were their greatest oppressors.—It is, however, by implication, a command for general perseverance in prayer in all public calamities, and an encouragement to any people who are oppressed, to commit their cause unto God, and not to despair, but to endeavour to acquire the divine favour by faith, obedience, piety and devotion.—Faith, when real, when an active principle, does indeed include the rest, and therefore is often put for the whole of our duty. But alas ! when God in mercy visits the earth to avenge his people, does he find this faith abound ?—How few are there, even at the best of times, who seriously seek after God ; how few who are constant in their devotions, who pray *always*. By *praying always* is not meant, literally to employ every moment of our time in prayer ; but to be *constant* at public prayer, *never* to neglect private prayer, and always to preserve ourselves in a pious, devout frame of mind. The intention of the parable is to shew the expediency of perseverance in prayer for obtaining our requests : and therefore, though it was particularly delivered for the consolation and encouragement of the whole body of Christians at that time as a collective body, yet it may very well be applied to private persons

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at all times : for as affliction is equally affliction, whether felt by one or by a thousand, so God is equally compassionate to every one who implores his aid. And who is there that does not constantly stand in need of it ? No one is at all times free from trouble, and even in his most prosperous days he has not less need of grace to preserve him from temptation than he has need of it to support him in adversity. There is then reason to pray always, as well when the heart is at ease as when it is in distress. But as our Lord exhorts men in the parable not to faint under afflictions, but to invoke the throne of grace, he chiefly shews the necessity and prevalence of prayer in procuring relief from God. Such is the power of God that we know he can relieve us, and such is his goodness that we may safely rely on him to do for us what is best. This is the ground of our confidence in him, “ that like as a father pitieth his own children, even so the Lord will have mercy on them who fear him.” Though our distresses excite no sentiments of pity in any human breast, though man turn from our complaints with unconcern, yet in heaven there is one whose compassion, like his power, is infinite. To him, then, in every calamity, let us

us pour forth our supplications. Impotent as the widow, we can do nothing of ourselves, but must implore foreign aid : yet not like her shall we address an *unjust* judge, and one who regards not man ; but the righteous Governor of the world, the tender Parent of mankind. If she, then, not discouraged by repeated denials, prevailed at last by importunity, how much more sure of succeeding shall he be with the God who heareth prayer. Him then let us address, who hath promised that if we ask we shall have : to *Him* let us *seek*, who hath assured us that we shall then find : to *Him* let us apply, who hath bid us knock, for the door of grace shall be opened unto us. But we must ask in faith, and in the spirit of prayer ; though earnest for relief, yet not repining at what we suffer, persevering and fervent, yet free from impatience, tarrying the Lord's leisure ; for if we implore his succour, and faint not, our prayers will be accepted.

Yet it has been asked by some, wherein consists the utility of prayer to God ; for can *he* be ignorant of our wants, who is infinite in knowledge ? Needs *he* be supplicated, who is infinitely good ? Can he by intreaty be diverted from, or induced to hasten the fulfilment

ment of his purposes, who is infinitely wise? 'Tis derogatory to the greatness of the Supreme Being to suppose this. What end then is answered by prayer, since the goodness of God on the one part, and his wisdom on the other, determining him to follow his own councils, must render it unnecessary? To this (which carries an implication that the scriptures which command us to pray, and not to faint, are not of divine authority) I answer, that should any offer up their petitions to God with a view of informing him of their wants; or of exciting his pity by supplication; or of inducing him to change his purposes, they must indeed conceive meanly and absurdly of Deity. But few, none who are Christians pray to God from such motives: And though we acknowledge the omniscience, goodness and immutability of God as much, or more than those cavillers do, yet we both see reasons for praying to him, and admire his goodness in enjoining us to do it. It is for our benefit and improvement. This will appear from the following considerations.

As God, who is infinitely good, suffers us to be sometimes in want and in affliction, he must do it to answer some good purpose: And the

the purpose is, to render us sensible of our natural weakness and absolute dependency upon him. We should forget that there is such a being as God, did we not feel the want of his assistance; we should forget that we are the creatures of his hand, and that all we possess flows from his bounty. Prosperity deceives and corrupts us, brings on a delirium that fills us with vain conceited notions of ourselves, and our own sufficiency, as it did in Nebuchadnezzar, who exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" Was not his reason passed from him when he thought and said this? And is not the reason of every man (at least in that respect) gone, who ascribes to himself, to his own abilities and power whatever he enjoys, forgetful that those abilities, and that power, are the gift of God?—But affliction expels that pride, conceit, and vanity, recovers our reason, and brings us back to God, whose being and power we are forced to acknowledge when we are driven to implore his mercy. There is then reason why we should be brought into such a state as to feel the want of divine assistance; and for the same reason we should

pray for it, as it tends to our improvement ; and therefore God requires, and hath commanded us to do it.

1. Prayer to God leads us to reflection ; it makes us call our ways to remembrance. We are apt to pass over our sins with unconcern, when we do not frequently erect the divine tribunal within our bosom ; for then only do we turn our thoughts seriously inwards, and examine our hearts, when we come to prostrate ourselves before the throne of Heaven : there we are sensible purity is required, and there we learn to know our own depravity. Thus prayer to God, who is infinitely pure and holy, teaches us to know ourselves, and convinces us that we have no claim of merit upon him, but are only objects for his mercy ; and the consciousness of our guilt and unworthiness which we then feel, whilst it melts the heart with contrition, produces the purest humility—humility the proper cloathing of every mind that presents itself before God.

2. Prayer to God keeps alive in us a sense of that duty and obedience which we owe to him : it brings to our recollection his greatness and supremacy ; that he is our Creator ;
that

that we are his creatures ; that it is his province to command, and our place to obey ; that his will should be our study, his law our delight ; and thus it weakens the force of those passions which are apt to seduce us : for in proportion as we retain God in our thoughts, are we furnished with an awful check to controul us from all excess. And when we are prostrate before the God of our life, how can we dare to entertain a thought that is foreign to his known will : how can we not resolve to obey him !

3. Prayer to God begets and cherishes a kind and merciful disposition, by impressing on our minds a strong sense of his *goodness*, and the perfection of it. Then, when we implore mercy ourselves, it appears to us to be truly amiable and divine ; and we naturally imbibe some sentiments of that kindness which we ascribe in the highest degree to God, and hope to experience ; for it is upon the very supposition, that his mercy is over all his works, that we invoke him ; invoke him for the repetition of that goodness which we have often experienced. 'Tis then we call to mind the support we have ever received from him, the various blessings of this life,

but above all, the great instance of his inestimable love, in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ. When we thus contemplate the divine goodness, and pray in confidence of being favourably heard, we ourselves catch a spark of that heavenly temper, and we learn to imitate Him whose mercy we implore.

4. Prayer to God is consolatory. When the heart is poured forth to the divine Being in humble supplication, the intercourse it then holds with him is productive of internal peace: it abates our grief, calms our spirits, renders us more composed and resigned, and is productive of inward satisfaction. Have you not sometimes experienced this yourselves, when, in those afflictions which excluded every hope of human relief, in the anguish of your grief you have implored the mercy of your God? Have you not then found that prayer blunted the poignancy of your afflictions—that the intercourse you enjoyed with your Maker became a balm to your wounded spirit, and gradually settled you in calm resignation; and that you have arisen from prayer with a composure and peace of mind, to which but a few minutes before

before you were an utter stranger? The God of all grace, who approved your piety, rewarded it with the consolations of his Spirit.

5. Prayer to God enlightens our understanding, and brings our will under subjection to it. 'Tis in these hours of true wisdom, when we are in communion with God, that our hearts get the better of the world; that our affections soar to heaven, and we find true treasure there; that we look forward to the great and glorious promises he has made; that we call upon him to increase our faith and confirm our good resolutions: his grace descends to impart the blessing we justly value, a divine complacency fills our breasts, we see mercy and love infinite embracing us; and 'tis then time sinks beneath our notice, and our soul pants for eternity:—valuable moments these, which return us to the world fortified against its temptations.

Thus prayer is necessary for our good, and for that reason is required of us; it makes us more happy now, and fits us for happiness hereafter: it presents to our minds the Deity clothed with the attributes of majesty and mercy, of wisdom and goodness; it exercises our faith in his promises, our affiance in his

providence, our gratitude for his kindness; it purifies our hearts, arms us against the seductions of vice, improves us in virtue, and prepares us for heaven.

But for the same reason that the Deity places us in such circumstances, that we want his assistance, and requires us to seek it, does he sometimes defer for a season granting our petitions, namely, that we may continue to address him in prayer, lest a too ready compliance with our request should render us, in some measure, forgetful of him. But shall we therefore faint, because he does not immediately answer us? No; we ought still to pray; which if we do, we can never faint: for as the dew that is exhaled by the sun falls down again, condensed, in refreshing showers, to moisten and fertilize the earth—so every prayer that ascends to heaven returns in grace to refresh our hearts, and increase our hopes.

In all our distresses, let us then look up to God, sanctifying our afflictions by prayer. To *Him* let the fatherless and widow apply; to Him let the oppressed, the unfortunate, the distressed, and the sick apply, in full confidence that whatever is best for each he will
do

do for them, and that they never will pray in vain. Sometimes, indeed, the subject of our grief, like a limb separated from the body, consists in the loss of what we can never expect to be restored; but yet the wound may be healed. The stroke of death, which deprives us of our friends and relations, though it cuts off all hope of enjoying them again, yet causes no incurable wound to those who apply to the God of all comfort. His grace can increase our fortitude, and his favour procure us other friends. Sometimes the occasion of grief is the loss of that which, though it can be returned, we ought not to pray for; but to pray only for grace to resign our wills to the dispensation of Providence. Such are all losses of temporal riches, honours, and power: to faint under such losses, argues a meanness and littleness of mind, to which they who pray to God are greatly superior. Poverty is indeed a sore evil, especially to those who have once lived in affluence; but still it is not insupportable, nor ought we to *grieve* on account of it, but to pray for grace to be satisfied with daily bread: then, whether he see fit to increase, continue, or diminish our present lot, our minds will maintain an equal tenor, and we shall be contented.

There is one thing, which, when possessed, alleviates every woe, and for which we ought all earnestly to pray till we have obtained it; and that is, the peace of God, which passeth all understanding. A peace arising from the divine Spirit working in our minds such a strong sense of the *meritorious* death of Christ, as to remove every apprehension of future punishment, to inspire us with unshaken confidence of future happiness, and make us rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This peace, then, it behoves every one to pray for without ceasing, till he receive it, and then constantly pray to have it continued; it will raise him above the world, superior to its sinful pleasures and acutest pains. This peace God will grant to every one who sincerely asks it: he will come to those who cry unto him day and night, and avenge them of their adversaries sin and the devil. Let no one, then, be discouraged because they are not immediately blessed with this peace in that full manner they could wish, for God is not unfaithful, he is only exercising their faith; and, if they persevere in prayer, and faint not, will in due time manifest himself unto them. Let us then pray for this, and every spiritual blessing;

bleffing ; be instant and perfevering in prayer, night and day lifting up our hearts to God, till we receive the good we ask, then praise him for his mercy, and beseech him to continue it to us here, till he receive us into glory hereafter.

SERMON

S E R M O N XII.

CONFESSION OF SINS.

Pſalm 32d. v. 5. Bible tranſlation.

I SAID, I WILL CONFESS MY TRANSGRESSIONS UNTO
THE LORD; AND THOU FORGAVEST ME THE INI-
QUITY OF MY SIN.

IF God were to be extreme in marking and
punishing all that is done amiſs, no fleſh
could abide it; miſery muſt then be the inevi-
table portion of all mankind: for ſuch is the
frailty of our nature, that there are none who
are altogether good, no, not one. But as
rectitude of conduct, and purity of heart, are
required of us for *our* good, (for we cannot be-
nefit God by our virtue, nor injure him by our
vices) ſo the deviations which we make from
our duty will be forgiven us upon our repent-
ance. This the goodneſs of God leads us to
ſuppoſe; for why ſhould he have made man,
who

who is incapable of unfinning obedience, unless he would accept such virtue as he is competent to, and admit of his repentance? That God will accept our repentance, and allow integrity for perfect obedience, seems to follow from *his* and *our* nature, and is confirmed by scripture, "*for he knoweth where-
of we are made, and remembereth that we are
but dust and ashes.*" Yet, though the goodness of God affords us the *hope* of pardon, upon certain terms, we ought to be filled with humility for the lapses of infirmity, and overwhelmed with sorrow for those transgressions which we might have avoided. Humility, in the former case, will incline us to seek the divine assistance, and will therefore strengthen our weakness; and sorrow, in the latter, will guard us against future offences. To impress our minds, therefore, with a sense of our natural frailty, is beneficial to us, and therefore required by God. To him we must confess our transgressions, which will render us humble and contrite, and then he will accept our repentance, and forgive the iniquity of our sins. Not to confess our sins, seems to imply either the haughtiness of the self-righteous, who arrogate to themselves absolute perfection, or else that God does not take cognizance of
human

human actions, which is to arraign his wisdom and justice; or that he cannot punish the disobedient, which is to deny his power. Such, therefore, have no claim to divine mercy; neither would it be consistent with the moral government of God to forgive those, who either deny that they stand in need of his mercy, or deny his divinity. But those who with humble and contrite hearts confess their sins, and implore his mercy, he is ready to forgive, and to blot out all their iniquities. Hence confession becomes a duty, which we owe to *ourselves* as well as to *God*; for, like all other duties, it promotes our welfare.

Confession of sins is requisite to procure pardon of them. By confessing our sins, is not meant a mere verbal acknowledgment of them; for if *that* were sufficient to obtain remission of them, mankind would be rather encouraged to continue in their vices than to renounce them, since, by a few words, they could then easily prevent any ill consequences from following, in the next world, the most debauched and wicked life in this. There is no sinner, how much soever he be abandoned to his lusts and passions, but would spare a few moments every day to recount his offences, if that alone were sufficient to secure him
from

from punishment : he might then safely sin on in full career, and would have no danger to apprehend from the most atrocious actions, provided he were but careful to confess, i. e. to mention them to God after he had committed them. To suppose that such a confession is sufficient to conciliate the favour of an infinitely just and holy Being, to avert his judgments and procure his mercy, is absurd. And yet, what more do *they* do who repeat their prayers every night, and every morning return to their vices. But there are men who are guilty of this absurdity: there are men who lead very bad moral lives blended with devotion; nay, and even they whose characters are in general fair, yet who live in one *habitual* sin, cannot escape being censured as guilty of this absurdity every time they say the Lord's prayer. For when we say "*forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,*" we mean nothing at all, unless at the same time we resolve to quit our sins: because we do not forgive those who we know are determined to continue offending us; but we are rather resolved to punish them for their obstinacy and perverseness, that we may deter them from offending in future. And as no man can sincerely pray to God to be punished

nished for his sins, therefore, unless he resolve to quit them at the same time that he says the Lord's prayer, he means either nothing, or only that absurd request of "*forgive me my sins, though I do not intend to renounce them.*" He may not indeed express himself in these terms, yet the thoughts of his heart can be resolved into no other meaning: the absurdity of which may perhaps escape his notice, because he does not reduce his thoughts into such language as shall precisely express them.

But such a confession is not that confession which will obtain remission: it must be a confession of the heart; a confession that implies a thorough sense of our guilt, a penitential sorrow, such as was the publican's, when he smote his hand on his breast and said—God be merciful to me a sinner. Such a confession as this is acceptable to God, because it is productive of a lasting conversion in man, and leads to a new life in godliness and true holiness. The Almighty Father of Mercies, therefore, who willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live, and who is ready to receive him into his favour upon a prospect of his amendment, requires the sincere confession of the heart: for

as the heart is the principal seat of the affections and passions, if we cordially confess our sins, we must at the same time sincerely renounce them; for what is confession, but perceiving and owning our faults? When this is done by the intellect, i. e. when with the understanding we perceive that we have done a wrong thing, we can never consider it as right; our reason must always be averse to it: but when this is done with the heart also, the seat of our affections, our will must likewise be averse to it. Our heart is sensible that we have done wrong, i. e. it no longer acquiesces or takes pleasure in that bad deed, but its affections are turned from it; for to own that we have sinned, and yet to take pleasure in our sins, is to confess with the head only, and not with the heart also. It may be asked—Can a man change his heart? Though he may abstain from indulging in unlawful pleasures, yet can he cease to be pleased with them when he chooses, if they give him pleasure? Let us consider this question. So long as he is pleased with his sins, he undoubtedly cannot cordially renounce them; but if he actually abstain from indulging in them, from a principle of obedience and duty, (which it must be allowed he may do)

do) then a very great point is gained towards a cordial renunciation of them: for, first, as improper affections and passions gather strength by gratification, so do they decline, and are daily weakened, by not indulging them; whilst at the same time good affections gather fresh strength, to an almost total suppression of the bad. Secondly: the man who is sincerely determined not to indulge himself in unlawful pleasures, will go one step farther; for, fearful of his own strength, and conscious that both his own happiness and the approbation of his Maker, require the inclinations of his heart to coincide with the determinations of his reason, he will seek the assistance of divine grace to work a cordial and thorough change in him; and, therefore, at the same time that he confesses his sin to God, he will add this prayer—"Make me a new heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Now, no such prayer, sincerely offered up at the throne of grace, was ever unanswered. Our natural notions of the divine goodness, teach us that God is pleased with and will answer such petitions; and the scriptures abundantly confirm it. He is stiled the God that heareth prayer. And what prayers can be so agreeable to him as those in

which we ask his heavenly aid, to enable us to obey his holy will? And our Saviour says, "Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." If, then, it be in the power of every man to abstain from indulging in unlawful pleasures; and if they who are determined so to abstain, may and will ask the grace of God, which is effectual to the purification of their hearts, and which they will receive if they sincerely ask; then it follows, that it is in the power of every man to confess his sins cordially: and such a cordial confession is necessary for all men; for though all men are not equally atrocious in their sins, yet all men are sinners. More or less we offend all; and therefore we have all more or less occasion to confess and repent. Nor is this a work that is to be done once only; for, after the utmost caution we shall find, upon an impartial retrospect, that we have often done what we ought not to have done, and left undone what we ought to have done. And it is likewise very reasonable to suppose that we have been guilty of many transgressions which may have escaped our notice or memory; for "who can tell how oft he offendeth?" Hence, when we confess
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our sins to God, we have occasion to add, "O cleanse me from my secret faults." An humble and sincere confession of guilt is what becomes every sinner; and, therefore, every man in all his addresses to God. For which reason our church hath appointed that both the Morning and Evening Service should begin with the confession of our sins, and a petition for the restoration of them that are penitent. After which follows the Absolution, in which it is declared, that all such as truly repent are pardoned and absolved. The one must precede the other: confession and repentance must go before absolution and remission; for by the former only do we become fit to receive the latter: and if we are sincere in the former, then hath God promised to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Far, then, should the language of the pharisee be from us; "God, "I thank thee that I am not as other men "are." This was not a confession, could lead to no amendment, was entitled to no mercy: it was a comparison that tended to raise him high in his own esteem; it was thanking God in a vaunting stile; it was the language of a heart swollen with that sort of pride, which, of all sorts, is most culpable

in the eyes of God: for self-righteousness makes a man arrogant before his Maker. The language of our lips and of our hearts should be, "We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep." Shame, sorrow, and compunction, should render us humble and contrite; and "God be merciful to me a sinner," should be each man's prayer. Then may we hope to be justified from our offences, or to have the iniquity of our sin forgiven. There is, indeed, one difficulty which would arise to check any very sanguine hopes of obtaining pardon by confession, or at least so far as to preclude a *confidence* of it, had not the express declaration of God's holy word obviated that difficulty; which is, that we cannot from reason discover for a certainty that it is consistent with the moral government of God to forgive those who wilfully transgress, even though they afterwards confess and repent. For though our natural notions of divine goodness and justice teach us that the Almighty would not have brought man into existence a creature incapable of unfinishing obedience, if he had resolved to punish him for every transgression; yet it does not thence follow that he will not take strict cognizance of every wilful offence, which he
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might have avoided. And though, from our natural notions of God's goodness we are led to *suppose* that he will pardon even those wilful offences, which are sincerely repented of; yet the bare light of reason could never absolutely assure us that he would: for, how far it might be requisite that justice should take place for the support of his moral government, it was impossible for man to discover. The utmost he could arrive at was a *hope* of pardon, after confessing and forsaking his sins, but not an *assurance* of it. Reason, indeed, will plainly shew that the obstinate sinner will *not* be forgiven; but it cannot so certainly prove that the penitent will. Some apprehensions of divine justice must ever check those hopes of mercy, and prevent them from being very sanguine, which are founded only on those sentiments of the Deity which we acquire by reasoning on his attributes. Accordingly we find that the ancient philosophers, who were not blessed with the knowledge of the divine oracles, though they held it safest to repent, yet alternately hoped and feared, and could never wholly lay aside their apprehensions of punishment. But these apprehensions of punishment are all done away from us, who enjoy the light of revelation;

for the sacred scriptures not only assure us that God will pardon them who confess their sins and repent, but acquaint us for whose sake he will pardon them ; informing us how the divine goodness and justice are both preserved, and through whom mercy and truth kiss each other, even through his blessed Son, who became a sacrifice for human offences. We then have the greatest reason to adore the goodness of God, and to close in with the offers of his mercy ; because we not only *suppose*, but are positively assured, that if we confess and forsake our sin, we shall be forgiven, nay, and made heirs of everlasting life. This assurance of mercy and reward, is such an encouragement to all to turn from the iniquity of their ways, that one would almost wonder that it is not universally done. But when we consider the fallacies and deceitful reasonings which take place in men, through the influence of their passions, our wonder will in some measure cease. Men impose upon themselves with vain hopes ; hopes, the foundation of which they never thoroughly examined, but blindly embrace them, because they wish them to be true. But surely, in a matter of such importance as the remission of sins and the inheritance of
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everlasting glory, it highly becomes us not to be mistaken, but seriously to examine the ground of our hopes, that if they be well founded, viz. in a consciousness of having sincerely endeavoured to comply with the terms of the gospel, they may rise into confidence, encourage our perseverance, and secure our salvation. But if, on the contrary, they should appear to be ill founded, that then, from a clear view of our situation, we may be induced to renounce them, and turn to what will afford us safer hopes, nay, certain assurance of mercy. Confession and repentance one might naturally suppose would take place in every sinner, from a serious and impartial consideration of his situation; for he would then clearly perceive that without them he could hope for no remission, no heaven; but must undergo a dreadful condemnation in the next life. A prospect this, which would render him of all men the most miserable. On the other hand, he would be induced to acknowledge his transgressions, and forsake them for that assurance of mercy which God has given him upon those terms.

Let us, then, my brethren, frequently review our lives, that knowing our sins we may confess and amend. Let us implore that

heavenly grace, which will enable us to amend and keep ourselves from presumptuous sin, from wilful transgression, which is the great offence, and by which men go beforehand to judgment: so shall our hearts be cleansed, and our acceptance with God sealed; whilst the consciousness of having done what he requires of us to fit ourselves for the kingdom of heaven, shall fill us with joy, which cannot be taken away, and which will make us live in hope and die in peace,

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S E R M O N XIII.

MORALITY A REQUISITE QUALIFICATION IN THE WORSHIPPERS OF GOD.

Matt. xv.—8, 9.

THIS PEOPLE DRAWETH NIGH UNTO ME WITH THEIR MOUTH, AND HONoureth ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.

AS the worship of God is a duty incumbent on every *rational* creature, it must be equally incumbent on them to perform it in a rational manner, so as to answer the ends for which it was designed and instituted. These ends are two-fold :

I. The views of God in requiring religious worship.

II. The views of Man in complying with it.

I. Reli-

1. Religious worship is required of man by God on account of the happy influence it will have when rightly understood and properly discharged, both to form and preserve our moral and religious character, such as God would have it.

2. And the view of man in discharging this duty, is to conciliate the divine favour, and thereby promote his own happiness.

And therefore neither the views of God nor man can be answered by it, when it is not discharged in a worthy and acceptable manner. Hence, for the same reason as we worship God at all, we should determine to do it agreeably to his will. It will therefore be requisite to enquire how God requires to be worshipped.

The outward expressions of religious worship are prayer, praise, and adoration, and they are generally accompanied with certain rites and ceremonies; which latter, in proportion as they are suitably adapted to excite and preserve the attention to the former, are useful and proper. Now, as worship itself is required by God on account of the beneficial influence it may have to form and preserve our character aright, the outward expressions of it in praise, prayer, and adoration, cannot be

be the *whole* of it: it cannot rest here; for that would be to offer him the *sacrifice of fools*; but the heart must accompany them, the sentiments of the heart must be expressed, and God must be worshipped not in words only, but in spirit and in truth. Hence it will follow, that we must come to the worship of God with such dispositions, and so prepared, that the words of our lips and the meditation of our hearts shall correspond; that our minds must be filled with serious and awful apprehensions of the great Being before whom we present ourselves; and we must be possessed of those qualifications which he requires in his worshippers, and without which we cannot please him.

To impress more forcibly on our minds, and to keep alive in us a strong sense of our obligation to lead a virtuous and holy life, is the very reason why God requires us to offer him a formal, serious, and solemn worship; and therefore a virtuous and holy life is indispensibly required of his worshippers. And it is as impossible for a man to attain the end in view (viz. the divine favour) by religious worship, without being thus prepared and qualified, as it is for God, who is the searcher of hearts, to approve of impurity, and who

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is infinitely wise, to require an useless homage: for his worship is not an idle form, appointed for ostentation. To conceive thus of the Most High, is to entertain very derogatory ideas of his majesty and wisdom: he is too great for us to add to his glory. It is for our improvement alone that he hath appointed us to worship him, that by the contemplation of his excellencies and greatness we may be led to a stricter imitation of his perfections, and a more perfect obedience to his holy will. Hence, in reality, it is in the heart only that we can worship him: no outward form can bring us near to him, or render our service acceptable, but when accompanied with internal devotion. The worship we render him, to be *agreeable to him*, must first be *pleasant to ourselves*: but this requires suitable dispositions; and it is on account of such dispositions, that the adorations he receives from saints and angels *above*, are so *acceptable to him* and so *delightful to them*; and therefore the same purity and integrity of heart, the same reverence, holiness, gratitude, joy and praise, should attend the worship of him on *earth*, as accompany that he receives from those who are round about his throne in *heaven*. The business is the same, and should be

be performed in the same solemn manner, and with the same holy dispositions. And first, it is requisite, when we approach God in religious worship, that we do it having a pure and sincere heart. Our hearts should be previously chastened, by reason and reflection, from all immoderate and improper desires; our thoughts withdrawn from vain and earthly objects; and our affections fixed on heavenly things.

To controul the licentiousness of the passions and appetites, and keep them in subjection to reason and the will of God, and not to indulge even in thought illicit and vain pleasures, is, indeed, not only proper, but, as far as human infirmity will admit, is at all times incumbent: for, “as the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the good and the evil,” so purity of heart, “without which no one shall see God,” must be constantly requisite in man; but more particularly so when he goes to worship in his holy temple, where the place itself (being dedicated to the honour of God) and the immediate business of it, bring to his mind, in a more lively manner, the divine presence.

To come to the altar of God, or enter his temple to worship him, whilst our thoughts
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are wandering after worldly objects---whilst our inclinations and desires are fixed on something else than on the kingdom of God and his righteousness---whilst our minds are occupied by covetous and avaricious views---are inflated with pride, or burning with revenge---are pining with envy, or fluttering with vanity---what is this but to treat the Almighty with the highest irreverence and contempt, as though he were not a being of purity and holiness, had not forbidden such tempers, or could not vindicate his authority? It seems to carry with it premeditated insult; and though *that* surely is not the case, (for can we conceive any one so grossly profane) yet it certainly argues a very blameable and disrespectful thoughtlessness; a thoughtlessness that frustrates the very design of religious worship, and renders every act of it an act of unmeaning and useless devotion.

When we appear before God to conciliate his favour by solemn worship, we should endeavour to appear such as we would wish to be found at his awful tribunal. When we beseech him to forgive us our sins, we should do it with a contrite and penitent heart, that renounces those sins, and not in an unmeaning

ing manner, in words only, whilst we retain a fondness for them, and have formed no resolutions to quit them; for why should not God inflict the punishment, if we retain the guilt; or why should he pardon the offence, if we resolve to offend?

When we implore his grace to enable us to amend, it should be with sincerity, with a hearty desire to subdue the lusts of the flesh, and to live soberly and godly; otherwise our petitions for grace are but mockery, and acknowledging what we ought to be, whilst we are indifferent about becoming such. To be conscious of gross and habitual sins, and yet formally and solemnly to present ourselves before God, without any sense of shame and compunctions of sorrow, without thinking on the means of escaping from so deplorable a state, without wishing it, without forming any pious resolutions,---what is this but to profane the temple of God, to brave the majesty of heaven, and to familiarize his idea to the mind in such a manner as to wear away all dread of his displeasure, all regard to his will, and to fear the conscience?

How unreasonable, then, are the hopes of such men, if they expect that their verbal adorations

adorations will be at all accepted by God. They are an abomination to him; they are dishonouring him and disgracing his worship, and certainly will be punished by him. If, among mankind in general, so inconsistent a character excites indignation; if, when we see a man constant at religious worship, yet not at all influenced by it in his life; praising God in the church, yet profaning his name in the world; acknowledging the blessings he has received, yet abusing them by the grossest misapplications; praying for grace, yet regardless of his morals; being either envious, malicious, revengeful, proud, haughty, opprobrious, illiberal, circumventive, avaricious, fraudulent, unkind, uncharitable, oppressive, unchaste, luxurious, or intemperate; if, when we see such a wretch devoutly prostrate in the form of godliness, yet not feeling the least power of it, our indignation rise, and we condemn him ten times more than if he had made no pretensions to religion, because of his hypocrisy and the open acknowledgment he makes of those sacred obligations which require him to live otherwise, but which he scruples not to break, increase his guilt, being in itself an enormous sin, arguing a calm and settled contempt of all authority,---how much

much more must God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, abhor and condemn him! In proportion as we give into such vices, or fail to regulate our conduct and form our dispositions by the precepts of God's holy word, in the very same proportion we are disqualified to offer him acceptable worship, and therefore must expect that our addresses will be rejected by him. But, on the contrary, as we ourselves are involuntarily led to approve and respect the man, who not only approaches God in worship, but evidently retains him in his thoughts; whose sincerity in his devotions is manifested by the conformity of his life to his religious professions, and by the purity of his manners. As such a character strikes us with consistence, and excites our approbation, so we cannot but conclude that it is acceptable to the Supreme Being. To the prayers of such an one the Lord will incline his ear: he hearkens to those who seek to recommend themselves to his favour by obedience, rather than by burnt offerings and sacrifice. He who hath dealt his bread to the hungry—hath pitied the afflicted—relieved the distressed—supplied the wants of the indigent, and aided the weakness of his fellow creatures, may with good confidence implore the favour of

their Creator. He who hath subdued revenge and learnt to forgive, will be heard when he intreats for mercy: he who is clothed with meekness and humility, will not be rejected at the throne of grace; for by his own example he justifies a favourable reception, as those of a contrary disposition justify a rejection of their requests: he who corrects what he finds amiss in himself, cleanses his heart, and endeavours to imitate God in his imitable perfections, will not be denied the assistance of his grace: his praises will not be rejected; they are the effusions of the soul; his adorations will not be despised; they are the grateful homage of the heart.

It should seem, therefore, that not only to discharge the duty of religious worship in such a manner as to be of any avail to us, by procuring the favour of God, but even so as not to provoke his indignation, we must concur with his views in requiring it, and be pre-disposed and prepared for it. We must endeavour so to wean our affections from the world, that it may not have an improper ascendancy over us, which will require us to maintain a strict observance of the divine commands, and to regulate our lives according to the tenor of God's laws, that our hearts may

may not condemn us when we appear before him. We must endeavour to acquire those virtuous and holy dispositions which shall lead us to love God, the fountain of all excellence, "with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength," and render spiritual communion with him agreeable and pleasant. And as we must be thus generally prepared, so, whilst we are at our devotions, we must endeavour to withdraw our thoughts from all worldly concerns, either of pleasure or business, and preserve them collected and fixed on the great objects of religion. We must remember the great Being before whom we stand, our obligations to him, our dependence on him as the author and preserver of our existence, the giver of all the good we enjoy, the arbiter of our fate, on whose sole pleasure our future happiness or misery depends: and then, from the general preparation of obedience, we may pray to him with confidence of being heard; from the prevailing disposition of our minds we may praise him with pleasure; from the sincerity of our hearts adore him with grateful reverence. Then we shall return from the worship of God with the important *truths* of religion more deeply impressed on our minds,

minds; their influence on our lives will be increased; our progress in all virtue and godliness of living will be advanced: the end for which the Deity requires us to worship him will be answered, and our end in discharging it will be obtained.

SERMON

great Being before whom we stand, our obligations to him, our dependence on him as the author and preserver of our existence; the great of all the good we enjoy, the author of our fate, on whose sole pleasure our future happiness or misery depends: and then, from this general preparation of the heart, let us pray to him with confidence of being heard; from the prevailing disposition of our minds we may praise him with pleasure; from the sincerity of our hearts adore him with gratitude and reverence. Then we shall return to the worship of God with the most important of religion: more deeply impressed on our minds.

S E R M O N XIV.

ON GLORYING IN THE CROSS OF CHRIST.

Gal. vi.—14.

BUT GOD FORBID THAT I SHOULD GLORY, SAVE IN

THE CROSS OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

NONE of the Apostles exerted themselves in the cause of Christianity with more earnestness and zeal than St. Paul. Though he was called the last, yet he seemed ambitious of becoming the first in merit. Patient and indefatigable in promoting *that* religion which he once destroyed, he endeavoured by a diligent discharge of his duty to atone as far as he could for his former misconduct: from this no pleasures could seduce him, no fears deter him, All prospects of worldly advantage, all temporal evils, nay even death itself, when accompanied with the terrors of racks and torture, could never shake his re-

solution; for he found them lighter than the dust of the balance, in comparison with the salvation of the soul. He well knew the infinite value of an immortal soul, and that nothing, however great the advantage might appear, could be equivalent to the smallest degree of eternal happiness. Looking then upon all other things as beneath his notice, when speaking of this, "God forbid," says he, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

By *glorying*, the Apostle does not mean vain boasting, but the setting a great value and esteem upon any thing we enjoy, and upon ourselves for the enjoyment of it.

Let us then consider why St. Paul condemns glorying in any thing but the cross of Christ, and why he glories in this.

1. This world and its enjoyments cannot deserve the first place in our affections and esteem, because neither are they eternal, nor is our stay here of long duration. We are not, however, to suppose that the Apostle condemns the bare use of temporal things, since all the creatures of God are, in themselves, good, and proper subjects for praise and thanksgiving. Nor can his words be justly interpreted to imply the absolute necessity of that

that strict renunciation of all worldly goods in every age of the church, which the particular state of it at the first publication of the gospel made necessary. He speaks neither of the use, nor of the abdication of our advantages, but of the not glorying in them; and therefore can only be understood of the undue place we are apt to give them in our affections and esteem, and of the extravagant methods too often taken to obtain and enjoy them. His doctrine, as it appears, is, that neither the honours, pleasures, nor profits of the world, are so valuable in themselves, nor so beneficial to us, as to deserve to engross our affections;—that they are in themselves much beneath the glorious and exalted views of a Christian;—that the truest judgment to be formed of them, is only to consider them as refreshments and accommodations on our pilgrimage to another country; and that we are to choose the great object of our desire beyond all these, and to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. And indeed to whose experience might we not appeal for the emptiness of human glory, for the dissatisfaction which earthly pleasures leave behind them, and the insufficiency of riches to our happiness, if considered

dered in themselves? To whose experience might we not appeal to prove that they are attended with care and anxiety both in acquiring and possessing them? The happiness of those who possess them is more apparent than real, it is an outward splendour without any solid content. Yet they are highly valued and eagerly sought; and men place their glory more in the possession of them than in the Cross of Christ.

2. But though the enjoyment of this worlds goods were not imperfect, yet still the possession of them would afford no just foundation for self-complacency and glory. On some occasions, to despise them indicates a superior greatness of mind and elevation of soul; to possess them, therefore, cannot confer true dignity; and he who prizes himself for his wealth and honours, as he glories in external things, may well be suspected to have nothing in himself to glory of.

But if such imperfection attend all earthly things, that they neither bestow happiness nor confer merit; they cannot deserve our chief esteem, nor afford any reason for boasting. The soul of man hath something divine in it. It aspires, it is restless after something great and excellent. It seeks perfection, perfection

in what is suitable to its nature and equal to its capacities; and nothing less will satisfy it. To expect this from the things of this world, and to pursue them with a view of being happy in the enjoyment of them, is to toil for disappointment, vanity, and vexation of spirit. They are not adequate to the desires of the soul. Nothing but what is pure, spiritual, and eternal, will satisfy her cravings; and therefore our views should not be bounded by, nor our labours confined to this world: but our chief attention should be given to heavenly things, which will procure us peace and satisfaction, glory, honour, and immortality.

If then all sublunary things are too mean for man's glory, 'tis folly to permit them to engross our affections. We ought rather to restrain our desires of them within such moderate bounds that they shall not impede our pursuit of more important and eternal concerns. Nay, our worldly affairs should be so conducted as to promote our spiritual success. Learning how to abound, we should use this world without abusing it, and, preserving a contented mind in every station, never suffer ourselves to be diverted from following after those ineffable glories which

which are reserved for those who persevere in well doing. All our wisdom, and all our endeavours should be exerted to ensure these, as the certain and only source of our happiness. On this account the Apostle condemns the glorying in any thing, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Why we should glory in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, will appear by considering what benefits we may derive from it; for they are inestimably great.

I. By the Cross of Christ our sins are expiated. By sin man alienated himself from God, and became obnoxious to divine justice. Now nothing that he himself could do, could make any atonement or reconciliation. What could he offer? The blood of bulls and goats has nothing in it that is naturally expiatory of human offences. Nor could such sacrifices, if not offered with a reference to some greater sacrifice, afford any sanction to the divine laws. Repentance itself, even though perfect, could be no atonement for past sins; it still left the sinner under the sentence of condemnation. Thus the state of man, when he looked into himself, was *that* of conscious guilt, with the prospect of future judgment without any possibility of delivering

delivering himself. But what *he* could not do, the Son of God hath done. He came down from heaven to redeem sinners—he bled on the cross, and made his soul an offering for sin; and having thus become our propitiation, he rose triumphant over death and the grave! In what then could the Apostle, in what can any wise man so justly glory as in the Cross of Christ, which, though it “was to the Jews a stumbling block, and “to the Greeks foolishness; yet is the power of God and the wisdom of God to “them who believe.”—“O Death, where is “thy sting! O Grave, where is thy victory! “The sting of death is sin, and the strength “of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, “who giveth us the victory through our “Lord Jesus Christ.”

II. But deliverance from the punishment of sin is not all that Christ hath done for man: He has likewise promised to deliver him from the power, the tyranny, and the slavery of sin.

The ill consequences of Adam's fall, are not more evident from the outward evils and miseries to which we are subject, than from that moral imbecility and internal corruption which every thinking man must have observed

served in himself. The understanding is often misguided by passion. The carnal will opposes our reason; and when it cannot corrupt her judgment, rejects her decisions, and disdains her remonstrances; so that the law of the flesh prevails over the law of the mind. We observe this in others, and often pity and condemn them for it. And, when our *own inclinations* are not concerned, nothing appears to us to be more unworthy and disgraceful to a rational creature, than to become the sport and slave of his passions. Yet, when we should apply these observations to ourselves, we seldom advert to our dispassionate sentiments, but, pre-occupied and pleased with sensual gratifications, disregard the *still small voice within us*, and fondly attach ourselves to such indulgencies, and cherish such desires, as charm away our reason, and plainly shew that our will, in a state of *nature*, is under the bondage of sin. From this bondage, which in our serious moments we perceive and lament, who shall deliver us? He who redeemed us. His grace can enlighten and invigorate the soul; can give that firmness and constancy to its resolutions, that energy to its endeavours, which shall vindicate to it the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

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The happiness of this divine liberty they are *most* sensible of, who having *most* severely felt the galling chains of sin, and the pungency of remorse, are by the grace of God emancipated and restored to the government of themselves. All indeed who, by the Spirit of Christ assisting them, overcome the world, are sensible of the heavenly freedom they enjoy; yet certainly they who were the greatest slaves, are the most sensible of their happy change. But to every one who enjoys it, it is such a freedom as cannot fail to make them rejoice in Christ, and to glory in his Cross. Though poor, despised, persecuted, and encompassed with perils, yet such satisfaction of mind results from the subordination of their will to reason and religion, such happiness from the consciousness of their integrity and virtue, from the spiritual communion they enjoy with God through Christ, and from assurance of salvation through him, as nothing in this world can equal, as nothing in this world can deprive them of. Every sincere Christian has, therefore, the greatest reason to glory in the cross of Christ, for his deliverance from the punishment and power of sin.

But

But though this glorious liberty cannot be obtained without the assistance of grace, yet we must remember that our co-operation with it is also requisite, for grace enables, it does not compel us to work out our salvation.

It is, therefore, of the utmost consequence to thoughtless, self-deluding sinners, who are engrossed in the cares and vanities of this life, to consider whither all their labours tend—to stop and recollect themselves—to see how vain and empty all their glory is; and to exert the moral powers they enjoy, the talents they have received, to that end for which God bestowed them. Hitherto they have been lost and bewildered in the mazes of sin and folly, or occupied with trifles which can never satisfy. And if they resolve to persist in them, and glory in their shame, though reflection and repentance will come at last, yet they will come too late, when they can serve only to condemn, but cannot give time for amendment. Now then, they should consider that the bare profession of the name of Christ is not glorying in his cross; and whilst they have time, and whilst they have power, they should enter on the practice of his religion, meditating on his sacred word, obeying his precepts, and familiarizing to their minds the great objects to
which

which they have been unhappy strangers. And above all, they should pray for that divine assistance, without which their own endeavours will be ineffectual, but with which they may overcome the world, "and desire
 " to glory in nothing, save in the cross of
 " our Lord Jesus Christ; by which, being
 " made free from sin, and become servants of
 " God, they may have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life."

This is the right manner of glorying in the cross of Christ, and the only manner that will avail us any thing. And it is of importance that it be adopted immediately, for time is swift, and life uncertain. Another year is past; and to look back, it seems but as a day. Yet, in this short period, how many of your friends and relations have dropped into the grave, some in the bloom of youth, some in the vigour of manhood, and a few in mature old age. A new year commences, and ere it be closed, many now enjoying health will be snatched away, and, in all probability, some who are now assembled here, for death comes like a thief in the night, sudden and unexpected; and therefore we cannot without danger, as well as sin, neglect preparing for it, on a presumption that the mercy and
 for-

forbearance of God will add this year to our
 lives. The aged must die soon, and the young
 may. You who are in the prime of your
 days, and are perhaps lamenting the death of
 some near relatives, who have lately finished
 their course, may, ere your grief end for
 them, be yourselves called hence, and be no
 more seen. To be prepared then for this
 change is your wisdom, and *that* which alone
 can prepare you, best suits your years; for
 virtue and piety are the true ornament of
 every age, and the cross of Christ the greatest
 glory of every Christian. As you cannot but
 acknowledge this, let me recommend to you
 a rule, which, if practised, will be highly con-
 ductive to your Christian improvement: A
 rule which every saint hath followed, and
 without which no one can ever attain any to-
 lerable degree of holiness;—I mean the setting
 apart some portion of every day for meditation
 and serious reflection. In this manner begin
 and sanctify the new year, and persevere in it.
 You will not find it an useless practice, for it
 will bring you to the knowledge of yourselves,
 of your weakness and errors, which is the first
 step to safety and amendment. It will tend
 to wean you from all excessive fondness of
 temporal pleasures—to render you circum-
 spect

spect—to guard you against temptation, and fortify your good resolutions. And you will find *that* satisfaction in religion and devotion which nothing else can give, and will glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ only. Amen.

R SERMON

S E R M O N XV.

ON THE SCIENCE OF PHYSIC.

Pfalm cxlvii.—3.—Prayer Book Translation.

HE GIVETH MEDICINE TO HEAL THEIR SICKNESS.

WHEN the Almighty framed the fair
fabrick of this world, he stored it with every
thing useful to man, whom he constituted
lord of creation, having breathed into his
nostrils the breath of life, i. e. having given
him a rational soul, by means of which he is
capable of subduing the earth, and rendering
all things subservient to his welfare and hap-
piness. The capacity of all other living
creatures seems confined within the narrow
limits of instinct, which they cannot pass;
but man appears possessed of a faculty, by
which he is enabled to make continual acces-
sions of knowledge; and it is to his exertions

of this faculty that he owes all his enjoyments, for if he suffer it to remain neglected, as an useless talent, he is the most destitute of all animals. The savage, who wanders naked in the woods, is exposed to evils, from which the wild beasts are exempt, having no natural clothing like them to defend him from the severity of the seasons, being less able to pursue his prey, and incapable of sustaining the same degrees of hunger and cold as they are. Providence hath, indeed, so plentifully provided *materials* for man's welfare, that every part of creation may be made to administer to it; yet they are only materials put in his power, the use of which requires his own labour and ingenuity; and by the application of these he soon emerges from absolute want into abundance. It was, perhaps, merely to call forth the powers of man's mind, that he might know and enjoy them, that his Maker made him so destitute without his own endeavours; that being thus forced, in some measure, to exert his intellectual faculties, and insensibly led from discovery to discovery, he might be invited to continue his researches into the laws of nature, and even enter into the boundless but pleasing field of abstract science.

The

The goodness of God is then evident, in providing a store of materials for man's welfare, and giving him an understanding how to employ them. Nor is his goodness less manifest in another respect. We are exposed to many accidental evils, and such as affect our health: with provident care he hath therefore furnished us with numerous remedies, and "given medicine to heal our sickness." But the knowledge of these remedies, like all other valuable knowledge, cannot be acquired without study; its utility, however, is a sufficient reward for all the pains it costs: this will appear on the slightest survey.

Our health may be impaired by a variety of ways. We are so fearfully and wonderfully made; the structure of our frame is so complex and delicate, that it may easily be disordered, and its proper motions obstructed; and then, unless a remedy be timely applied, the whole machine may soon go to ruin, and death inevitably ensue. The wise and good Author of our existence hath therefore providentially bestowed a sanative virtue on many plants and minerals, to counteract the malignity of disease, and restore the sick body to its proper spring and habit—to its health and vigour. Perhaps there is no disease to which

the human body is subject but what nature furnishes a remedy for : the only difficulty is to discover that remedy. The daily improvements, however, in natural philosophy and the medical art leave us room to hope, that, in time, the knowledge of the physician may be adequate to the cure of almost every disease. But to discover by what means remedies may be provided, to explore the latent virtues of herbs, minerals, &c. to know what effects they will produce in different combinations, and how they may be medicinally applied on different occasions, requires nice observation, attentive application, and much experience, far beyond what every man can make. Hence the great utility of a society of men, and the respect and emoluments to which they are justly entitled, whose profession and study is the preservation and restoration of the health of their fellow creatures.

And, indeed, the study of phisic is what cannot be too highly honoured, nor too much encouraged ; for we are all liable to sickness. And what in this life is valuable to him who is pining under sickness, but the means of recovery ? Health is every thing to the poor ; and without it the rich can enjoy nothing : nay, much of our happiness depends not only

on

on our own health, but on that of our relatives. The tender parent, who beholds his offspring drooping, is miserable. See the father of a family languishing with sickness—his wife and children, whose affections are fixed on him, whose support depends on him, wishing, praying for, alternately hoping and doubting, his recovery; anxiously watching every symptom, and having in their countenances strongly painted every change they perceive in him. Who would not rejoice to wipe away their tears, and restore him to their ardent wishes? The art, therefore, which enables a man to do this, is a glorious art: the science of it is a noble and humane science; and consequently the study of it most honourable, and worthy of all encouragement.

The maladies to which men are subject being various and numerous, and the Almighty having given them medicine to heal their sickness, and an understanding to discover how to use it; we may well presume that the study of physic hath in all ages engaged their attention. And, indeed, if we search into the remotest antiquity, we shall find that this science hath ever had its professors. In rude ages, before knowledge was much ad-

vanced, divinity, phyfic, and astronomy, were comprehended under the general name of *wisdom*, and professed by the same persons. But as the boundaries of science became extended by study, these branches of wisdom were separated, and each had its own professors: and so early as the days of Joseph, the son of Jacob, phyfic was so much studied in Egypt, that the physicians are mentioned as a distinct order. Of the Books of Mercury, (which were the bible of the Egyptians) fix related entirely to phyfic, and were studied not by all the priests, but only by a medical order of them, called the *πασοφοροι*, i. e. such as wore the cloak. And the practice of phyfic was subdivided among the faculty into several branches; a proof that they had greatly advanced the knowledge of it, since each separate branch could sufficiently occupy the attention and practice of its particular professors. In Egypt, says Herodotus, every distemper has its own physician, who confines his practice to that, and undertakes no other: some are for the eyes, some for the head, some for the teeth, some for the belly, and others for occult diseases. (ἡ δὲ ἰητρικὴ κατὰ τὰς σφιδάσκει. μὴς γούσθ' ἑκάστῳ ἰητρὸς ἐστὶ, καὶ ὁ πλεονών. ἅ μὲν γὰρ, ὀφθαλμῶν ἰητροὶ κατὰσσεσι. οἱ δὲ, κεφαλῆς. οἱ δὲ, ὀδοντῶν. οἱ δὲ, κατὰ νηδύν. οἱ δὲ, τῶν ἀφανέων νοσῶν.

And

And in order to find out the origin and nature of occult diseases, the Egyptian monarchs, who greatly patronized this study, ordered dead bodies to be dissected. "In Egypto, regibus corpora mortuorum ad scrutandos morbos infecantibus."—Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. xix. cap. 5. But as none of their treatises have come down to our times, we cannot determine to what degree of medical skill they attained. This only we know, that Egypt, before it was subdued by the Persians, was much celebrated for medical knowledge: but after its subjection it seems to have declined in that and every other science. The Greeks, who sometimes visited Egypt for their improvement in natural as well as metaphysical philosophy, applied themselves also to the study of physic; but neither they, nor their successors the Romans, made any great advances in it.

To modern discoveries we owe many useful medicines; and from the philosophical spirit which at present prevails, we may hope for many more. But whilst we look forward with these pleasing views, let us not defraud of their just share of praise those who have advanced the knowledge of physic to its present state. For when we consider the difficulties

culties attending the study of physic, and the great application it requires, far from complaining of the progress made in it, we may rather wonder at its great improvement: for, after the natural properties of plants and herbs are examined—what salts, and oils, and spirits they contain discovered—after a thousand chemical preparations of minerals, and various processes to unlock the reservoirs of nature—to discover what *medicinal* virtues each possesses separately, and what result from compounding them in different proportions—to learn their effects on the human body—to perceive, by symptoms, the nature of a disease in its earliest stage—to know what to apply to check its progress—what to give in a more advanced period——Who does not see that all this requires not only the most attentive study, but very great experience? And here I may congratulate my country, and this Society* in particular, with repeating what I have with pleasure heard, viz. that as to Theory and Practice, the Apothecaries of London are the first in Europe; are too inquisitive to rest satisfied without a good share of knowledge in

* This Sermon was preached before the Company of Apothecaries.

those

those sciences on which *that* of physic depends, and that many are eminent in them. Nor are these your liberal pursuits without their encouragement; for though the labour of such preparatory studies be great, yet it is attended with a refined pleasure. Botany and chemistry are a rich and inexhaustible source of entertainment—often agreeably surprize with unexpected wonders, and shew forth the works of the Creator in an infinite variety of ways. Whilst you thus explore the wisdom of the Creator, and improve your minds with the useful knowledge of his secret works, it is impossible but that your admiration should be raised, and your hearts warmed with gratitude towards so good a Being, who kindly giveth medicine to man to heal his sickness. When you find those things, which to a common observer appear useless, possessed of the most extraordinary properties, and, when properly prepared, rendered valuable medicines in many disorders—when you discover the most virulent poisons carefully locked up in the crude mineral, but open to your use by art—when you learn that, by the judicious application of even those powerful ingredients which are capable of soon destroying the human frame, the happiest effects are produced,

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in restoring the sick to health—when you see the provident bounty of nature in affording so great and valuable a *materia medica* for the use of the physician, and her no less provident caution in guarding against an ignorant and destructive use of them, by secreting them from vulgar eyes—how must you adore the goodness and wisdom of God, and exclaim with the Psalmist, “ Lord, what is man, “ that thou art mindful of him ; and the son “ of man, that thou so regardest him ! ”

A proper sense of the goodness of the Almighty Father of mercies filling the heart with gratitude and thankfulness, is what we may reasonably expect in every philosophical and serious man ; for an acquaintance with the works of nature leads to nature's God ; and the knowledge of our own weakness and infirmities cannot fail to convince us, that we every moment depend on his providence for our support and existence. And what influence ought such conviction to have in our hearts, and on our conduct ? Ought it not to inspire us with sentiments of piety, to make us set God always before us, and dispose us to obey his holy laws ? This is the way to procure his favour and blessing, without which, in whatever we undertake, our
own

own exertions will avail little. If this were not evident to every reflecting man, I might appeal to your experience in confirmation of its truth: for though the age of miracles is past, and the sick are no longer healed by a word and a touch, yet how many instances occur, in which an over-ruling Power appears! How often is it found that a disorder, seemingly slight and of no consequence, gains ground in spite of the utmost caution, and baffles the profoundest skill? When the messenger of death hath received his commission, no human art can save: and, on the contrary, when the patient has been given over, the physician has sometimes been surprized with an unexpected recovery, that wanted only to be more sudden to give it the full splendor of a miracle. Though such instances may be assigned to extraordinary causes in nature; yet as nature is governed by an invifible and incontrollable power, and subjected to the laws of the Creator, nevertheless these causes, as extraordinary, prove a particular interposition, and partake of the nature of a miracle, which is nothing else than an equal exertion (though different from the ordinary course) of *that* same Power, by which all things subfist and all changes are produced.

duced. I would not, however, hence infer, that we are supinely to trust to such interpositions, for that would be presumption, and not piety: but I would infer, that though the Almighty hath established certain general laws in nature, that, by attending to them, we may form general theories, and acquire useful knowledge by experience, yet he sometimes deviates from those laws, to render us sensible that they depend on him, and make us look up to Him as the first cause and mover of all. As he hath given medicine to heal our sickness, it is our duty to use it; but still we are not so to depend on its natural effects as to forget *Him*, and that the “issues of life and death are in his hands.” Whilst we use the means which he hath graciously provided for the restoration of health, we should implore his blessing on them, for he can withhold, and he can increase, as he pleases, that sanative virtue which he originally gave them.

We have considered the goodness of God as manifested in his provident care to furnish mankind with the means of restoring the body, when impaired by sickness. But since as our earthly frame is not constituted for any long

long duration, and the hour must soon come when its dissolution will take place, and a period be put to our existence here, we cannot but be sometimes anxious about our future state. Whether this life be our all, or whether the soul, when divested of the body, will retain the power of perception; and if it does, whether it will be happy or miserable; and how far this will, or whether it will at all, depend on our behaviour in this life; whether we shall be summoned to give an account of the things done in the body, and shall be condemned by rigorous justice, or absolved by favouring mercy; by what means, and on what terms, this mercy may be obtained—are all questions about which the mind must sometimes be solicitous, but which it can never resolve by simple reason. He alone can satisfy us on these interesting subjects, on whose will they all depend: He, only, who supports the soul in existence, can assuredly tell us whether he will or will not continue to do it hereafter: He, alone, can assure us of future judgment, and inform us how far he will temper justice with mercy: He, alone, can prescribe the terms, as He only can provide the means of pardon and salvation. And
all

all this he hath done in the Gospel of Christ, in which life and immortality are brought to light, and all that is requisite to recommend us to the divine favour is fully revealed ; and in which, though the severity of justice is denounced against the obstinate and incorrigible sinner, yet mercy is offered to the humble penitent, and sincerity promised to be accepted for perfect obedience, through him who, having by his death and sufferings vindicated the divine authority, has satisfied the demands of justice.

Here, then, we have a medicine for the mind, to heal the sickness of every one labouring under the consciousness of guilt, and dreading the divine displeasure, which must more or less be the case with every man (for who can say he is without sin) : how much reason, then, have we to bless that goodness which hath made this kind provision for our peace of mind here, and our happiness hereafter. With thankfulness we ought to receive this last great gift of Heaven ; to value it as containing the most important knowledge, to read it with diligence and attention, without which it can be of no service to us, and to pray to God to assist us with
his

his grace, that we may make it the rule of our lives, and the foundation of our hopes; that so, when this short life is ended, we may be received into the mansions of everlasting bliss.

S

SERMON

S E R M O N XVI.

ON REPENTANCE.

Isaiah i. 16, 17, 18.

WASH YE, MAKE YOU CLEAN, PUT AWAY THE EVIL
OF YOUR DOINGS FROM BEFORE MINE EYES; CEASE
TO DO EVIL. LEARN TO DO WELL; SEEK JUDG-
MENT, RELIEVE THE OPPRESSED, JUDGE THE
FATHERLESS, PLEAD FOR THE WIDOW. COME
NOW, AND LET US REASON TOGETHER, SAITH THE
LORD: THOUGH YOUR SINS BE AS SCARLET, THEY
SHALL BE AS WHITE AS SNOW; THOUGH THEY BE
RED LIKE CRIMSON, THEY SHALL BE AS WOOL.

IN the former part of this chapter, the
Prophet complains of the depraved state of
the whole Jewish nation;—that immorality
and iniquity pervaded every part of it, “the
“whole head is sick, the whole heart
“faint;”—that the body of the people, poor
and rich, were equally corrupt, “from the
“sole of the feet, even unto the head there

“is no soundness;”—that this had rendered them obnoxious to the Divine displeasure, which they would in vain endeavour to avert by religious ceremonies, whilst they neglected the weightier matters of the law, judgment, justice and mercy; for that the observance of the former is acceptable only so far as it proceeds from a spirit of general obedience, and serves to confirm the discharge of the latter.

To shew the fallacy of their expectations of acquiring the divine favour by ceremonial and ritual observances only, and to assure them that repentance was the only way of recommending themselves to God, and that this would effectually do it, is the view of the Prophet. And since too many are even now apt to rest satisfied with the form of godliness, without having any regard to the power of it, I shall consider from the words of the text,

I. The necessity of a virtuous repentance to recommend us to divine mercy.

II. The promise annexed to it.

1. “Wash ye, make ye clean,” says the Prophet. The polluting nature of sin is represented in scripture by the strongest images drawn from the material world. It is to the
foul

soul in a moral sense what filth is to the body in a natural sense; it defiles and stains it, renders it odious and disgusting, and therefore very unacceptable to Him who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity. It is impossible that the Almighty should not disapprove of those rational beings who live contrary to the reason he has given them.—It is impossible that he should not disapprove of those accountable creatures who disobey the laws he has prescribed them. Debasing their nature as they do by a vicious course, and acting in defiance of *his* authority, can he be enquired of at all by such? Can their sacrifices and offerings be acceptable to him?

In whatever way a man corrupts himself, whatever be the sin in which he indulges, he must cleanse his heart from it, before his prayers can reach the throne of grace. It is mocking the Almighty to think to flatter him by external addresses; and not to worship him in spirit and in truth, is not to worship him at all.

2. "Put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes," says God. In order to do this we must consider our conduct and dispositions, that we may reform the one, and correct the other, wherever they are wrong.

wrong. It will not be sufficient to abstain from our sins for a season, we must renounce them altogether, and eradicate them from our hearts; for reformation, to be acceptable, must be sincere and permanent. We must consider with whom we have to do. We have not to do with man, who may be deceived by a specious conduct. We may impose upon man by a fair outside. By acts of devotion and a formal attendance on publick worship, we may appear religious, and yet not be actuated by real piety. By eleemosynary gifts we may gain the reputation of being charitable, though void of all philanthropy. By cautious attention we may acquire the good will and favour of those for whom we entertain no affection. But God can scrutinize the motive of every action. "To him all hearts are open, and from him "no secrets are hid." From *him* we can never disguise our real sentiments: and, therefore, unless by a sincere and unfeigned repentance we render ourselves fit objects of his mercy, we can never expect it.

"Cease to do evil." This is a very proper charge to every man; for who is there who does not often do what he ought not to do, as well as leave undone what he ought to do?

But

But is not this an argument of the corruption of the heart? And if this is found in the best men who have experienced the blessedness of true devotion, and rejoiced in it;—if repentance be necessary in them, still more so must it in those, who have lived altogether regardless of their duty to God: who have never thought on it, or if they have it was only in a cursory way:—who are continually violating the laws of *Him* who is infinitely holy, just and powerful. For what must be the fate of such men if they continue disobedient? Can they expect any thing but a fearful looking for of judgment to come, since their perverseness renders them fit objects of God's justice only?—and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; for he will render to every one according to his works; and they who have done evil, [i. e. who persevere in doing evil] shall go into everlasting fire.

Exposed, therefore, by the rigour of justice, to such tremendous sufferings, nothing but mercy can save them. But before mercy will be extended to them, they must become fit objects for it. They must “cease to do evil.” For the mercy of God is not a blind mercy indiscriminately shewn to all,

but it is directed by consummate wisdom. It dissolves not his laws, but confirms them, being extended to those only who repent and obey. It is an encouragement to men to quit their vices, and return to their duty: but it affords no hope to the obstinate sinner; since all who would experience the mercy of God must first "cease to do evil."

Again. They must not only "cease to do evil," but "learn to do well." And here we may observe that righteousness is not inherent in us. We are not born righteous, but we must become so by our own endeavours and the grace of God. We must "learn to do well." Naturally we are prone to evil; our carnal affections lead us that way, and the law in our members warreth against the law in our mind. We must, however, no longer fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but, exerting the moral power which the Deity hath given us as rational creatures, we must "cease to do evil;" yet we are not to rest satisfied with this negative virtue only, but proceed to that which is positive; "We must learn to do well." And this we must so thoroughly do, as to produce that change in our inclinations and affections which is expressed in the New Testament by the strong terms

terms of regeneration—"being born again, "becoming new creatures;" having other views, dispositions and desires than we formerly had; being changed from carnal to spiritual; aspiring after heavenly things; turning to God with all our heart; chearfully concurring with the motions of his grace; taking pleasure in fulfilling his holy will. It is then that we properly and in a religious sense "learn to do well;" for good moral actions as naturally follow true piety of heart, as the shadow does the substance, "To seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, "judge the fatherless, and plead for the "widow," are the natural effects of being born a new creature in Christ Jesus. And then it is, when we have thus learned to do well, that we become fit objects to receive the mercy of God. These are the terms on which he offers it: which brings me to consider,

II. The promise annexed to a sincere and virtuous repentance, viz. an absolute pardon of all our sins.

"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as white

"as

“as wool;” if ye be willing and obedient. Here we see the goodness and holiness of God richly displayed, in endeavouring to recover his moral creatures to virtue, by promising them a full pardon, if they be willing and obedient in future. The merciful goodness of God is said to endure for ever, and it is said with the strictest propriety, for, properly speaking, “God is love,” and in him is no wrath at all. His benevolence is pure, and his wisdom infinite; hence he is ever disposed to treat us in that manner which is best suited to our moral state. Punishment with him is not vindictive, but corrective; for he willeth not the death of a sinner, and therefore repentance, by bringing us into that moral state, to which suffering is designed to bring us, removes the necessity of punishment, and the merciful goodness of God is displayed in a free and absolute pardon.

The conscience of the sinner is not, however, immediately freed from all apprehensions of divine justice. Guilt is ever followed by fear; and he that knows he deserves punishment, cannot at once divest himself from all expectation of it, when he considers that his Judge is Almighty and Omniscient.

Hence

Hence that gloom and melancholy with which many are oppressed when they begin to have an awakening sense of their sins, and become conscious of their guilt. Justice they know condemns them;—they feel the sentence within their conscience, and are afraid. They cannot do away their guilt. They are heavy laden with a consciousness of it, and a future expectation of judgment. But what they cannot do, God can, and hath promised to do it. “Though your
“sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as
“snow; though they be red like crimson,
“they shall be white as wool,” if ye be willing and obedient. This is, indeed, a figurative expression, for the nature of sin can never be changed: But when it is repented of, it shall no longer be imputed to the sinner; the defilement he contracted by it shall be done away, and those glaring stains removed which no human power can remove; i. e. God will remit the punishment of their transgression, and treat them as favourably as if they had always retained their innocence: which is expressed in another part of scripture thus, “If the wicked will turn from all
“his sins that he hath committed, and keep
“all my statutes, and do that which is lawful
“and

“and right, he shall surely live, he shall not
“die. All his transgressions that he hath
“committed they shall not be mentioned
“unto him; in his righteousness that he hath
“done, he shall live. Have I any pleasure
“at all that the wicked should die, saith the
“Lord God, and not that he should return
“from his ways and live?”*

Now what greater encouragement to repentance can be given than such an assurance of pardon and gracious acceptance; an assurance not founded on the fallible reasonings of man, but on the express promise of God, whose word can never fail? If the consideration of such mercy will not induce men to repent, they must be incorrigible; for what more can be done to recover them to virtue and obedience?

But some, perhaps, presuming on the Divine mercy, as thus manifested, may conclude that the means of complying with the terms of it will ever be afforded them till they do comply; and therefore defer beginning that work to which they are invited by so gracious a promise; and thus render the goodness of God, which should lead them to repentance,

his sins that he hath committed and he shall live
*Ezekiel xviii. 21, 22, 23.

a motive for continuing in disobedience. And this, perhaps, is the case with most sinners; for there are none but know that repentance must precede remission; and few but have a distant intention of repenting. But such men should consider that if their conclusion were just, if however long they deferred repentance, they were sure not to be called off the stage of life till they had made their peace with God, then such long-suffering would encourage disobedience, and therefore would frustrate the design of it. It would be the long-suffering which one delighting in his sins, and resolving to continue in them requires, and therefore contrary to the nature and end of that long-suffering (of God) which is designed and calculated to bring men to repentance. And if men harden their hearts, and abuse the mercy of God, by refusing to comply with the terms of it when offered, he will call them to account when they are not aware, and give them their portion “where
“there is weeping and wailing, and gnash-
“ing of teeth.” Let none, therefore, draw so fallacious and destructive a conclusion, viz. that because God is merciful, and hath promised to forgive the truly penitent, therefore he will continue the life of every one till he
does

does repent. His goodness is abundantly manifested in the gracious promise of blotting out our past sins if we be obedient in future. And to us who are acquainted with the means by which, in the scheme of divine mercy, the moral government of God is vindicated, even by the death of his Son Jesus Christ, his mercy to mankind appears not only far greater than they could hope without such a promise, but than they could dare to ask. Who could dare to ask of God, to make his Son an atoning sacrifice for the sins of man? Yet such was the mercy of God, that he hath done this; and to the promise of pardon hath given evidences of it; evidences that shew how ample and extensive that pardon will be. Not a single sin, however atrocious, shall appear against him who sincerely repents. Though red as scarlet, deep as crimson be the dye of his guilt, yet the blood of Christ shall wash it away, and present him pure to God.

It is indeed impossible, though we repent, and are willing to become perfectly obedient, but that frailty will in some measure adhere to us, for in many points we offend all. But though the flesh be weak, yet if the spirit be willing, if we endeavour to obey to the

the utmost of our power, our integrity will, through Christ, be accepted for the most perfect obedience. His merits will clothe us with the white robe of righteousness, and entitle us not merely to remission, but to a glorious reward.

This appears from the blessed consequences that will follow our pardon and acceptance through Christ. We shall enjoy the divine favour to all eternity. Situated in the regions of bliss, where nothing that pains or offends can enter, free from every impure desire, glowing with holy affections, with gratitude and love to our God and Redeemer, we shall enjoy heavenly happiness, far beyond any thing that eye hath seen, or ear heard, or the heart of man conceived. What an encouragement is this to every one to set his affections on things above, to quit those things which his reason cannot but condemn, which debase his nature, and terminate in destruction; and to embrace those things which his reason approves, which exalt and ennoble him, and lead to happiness! What more can goodness, infinite goodness do for the welfare of rational creatures than is done? What motive more powerful can the imagination conceive to excite men to a virtuous and holy life, than
that

that their sins shall be cancelled, and heaven opened to them, if they will "cease to do evil, and learn to do well?"

"Come then, and let us reason together," you who have hitherto lived unto the world, and not unto God. You seek happiness; but can you find it in sin?—for in the hour of reflection what are your expectations? When your heart condemns you of acting beneath your nature, and disobeying your God, can you be happy? Alas! can he be happy, who, when he thinks, is oppressed with a fearful expectation of judgment to come? Does not the happiness of such an one require that he should escape from the danger to which he is exposed? And how easy is it for you to escape, if you seize the present opportunity, for now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, whilst you have life and time to repent: but if you harden your hearts, you will not enter into the rest of God. Oh consider this, and snatch yourselves from perdition. But little is required of you to renounce, and much is offered you in return: for are any of the pleasures of sin equal to what you would acquire by repentance? The calm satisfaction of conscious rectitude, the peace of God which passeth all understanding,

ing, the chearful expectation of eternal bliss, far exceed any thing the world can bestow. But the actual fruition of this bliss will surpass all present conception. What then does your interest, your happiness require, but that you turn unto God, that you embrace the proffered mercy, and comply with the righteous terms of it? Hope not to escape his justice if you abuse his goodness, for his mercy, though it embraces the penitent, cannot consistently with his holiness be extended to the obstinate sinner. Consider then your situation, and lay hold on the present opportunity which the long-suffering of God affords you of ceasing to do evil, and learning to do well; for then, and not till then, “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”

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...of God which will bring you to
the Father. ...
...of God which will bring you to
the Father. ...

THOUGHTS

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION

ON THE

ON THE
INFLUENCE OF RELIGION

IN

CIVIL GOVERNMENT.

BY THE REV. DR. JAMES GILBERT, M.A.

ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY TO THE ROYAL
FAMILY, AND OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR W. B. NICHOLSON,
FALL-MALL,
1790.

THOUGHTS
ON THE
INFLUENCE OF RELIGION



THOUGHTS
ON THE
INFLUENCE OF RELIGION
IN
CIVIL GOVERNMENT,
AND ITS TENDENCY TO PROMOTE AND PRESERVE THE
SOCIAL LIBERTY,
AND RIGHTS OF MAN,

BY THE REV. DAVID SCURLOCK, M.A.
ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S JUSTICES OF THE PEACE FOR
THE COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAM.

Licentia, nisi coerceatur, parit audaciam, quæ ad omne
flagitium et facinus evadet.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. NICOL,
PALL-MALL.

1792.

THOUGHTS

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CIVIL GOVERNMENT,

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SOCIAL LIBERTY,

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BY THE REV. DR. J. A. A. M. A.
ONE OF HIS MAJESTY'S CHAPLAINS IN ORDINARY
TO HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

LONDON: PRINTED FOR C. NICOL, FINE-ARTS, 15, N. MARK LANE.
1852.

TO THE MOST NOBLE THE
MARQUIS OF BUCKINGHAM,
KNIGHT OF THE
MOST NOBLE ORDER OF THE GARTER,
AND
LORD LIEUTENANT
OF THE COUNTY OF BUCKINGHAM, &c.

MY LORD,

SENSIBLE as I am of the invaluable blessings which I derive from the happy constitution of my country, in church and state, I feel it a duty incumbent on me, to offer my contribution to its support; against the attacks of needy, discontented, seditious, and prophane men. The loyalty of Englishmen, as you, my Lord, well

know, is the loyalty of reason; it consists in the observance of laws which at once give, and protect liberty, and in yielding that obedience to the Sovereign which the laws require. It maintains the right of constitutional opposition to arbitrary power on the one hand; while it is zealous in supporting legal government against the spirit of anarchy and disorder on the other.

If it is creditable to a work, that it should be inscribed to one who is a perfect judge of the subject of it, the following pages will receive a very peculiar advantage from being addressed to your Lordship. Impressed with these sentiments, I submit this Treatise to the Public, under the sanction of your Lordship's name, as the best means of procuring it credit and success. Your public conduct, my Lord, receives, as it well deserves, the

honourable tribute of public approbation; and your private virtues are above my praise:—I feel, however, a very superior satisfaction in bearing my testimony to the great and good qualities which distinguish your character; and in thus expressing an ardent wish, that you may long continue to be, what you have ever been, an ornament and honour to your country—

I have the honour to be,

With the greatest respect,

Your Lordship's

Most obedient humble servant,

D. SCURLOCK.

honourable tribute of public approbation; and your private virtues are above my praise:—I feel, however, a very superior satisfaction in bearing my testimony to the great and good qualities which distinguish your character; and in thus expressing an ardent wish that you may long continue to be what you have ever been, an ornament and honour

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I have the honour to be
With the greatest respect,
Your Lordship's
Most obedient humble servant

D. SCURLOCK
I am, Sir, very respectfully,
Your Lordship's
Most obedient humble servant

THOUGHTS, &c.

THERE is no truth more evident from experience, nor more affecting in the contemplation, than that the greatest blessings are liable to be perverted to the worst purposes; nor, in any of the various circumstances of life and society, does this observation appear to be more fully justified, than in the use which men are apt to make of liberty.

The simple idea of liberty is charming to the human mind, and, when considered in its proper definition, as giving rational beings the power of doing all which they ought to do, consistent with their own individual happiness, and the general good of that society to which they belong, it expresses one of the greatest

blessings which our nature has received from the bounty of heaven.

But in all periods of the world, this great and leading principle of human happiness, has been sometimes misunderstood, or perverted; and men have frequently formed such fanciful speculations and enlarged views of their civil and religious rights, as Christians and free subjects, that they have been seduced by their own extravagant misconceptions, or the arts of others, into a conduct altogether inconsistent with the rational freedom of social men. Nay, how often has liberty been considered as a privilege to gratify the passions, instead of a principle to correct them; and how often has it been employed as a cloak to carry on the designs of ambition and tyranny, of anarchy and sedition?

Of these effects, proceeding from misconceived notions of liberty, or an insidious perversion of it, whether we consider

it as operating to individual gratification, or to public disorder, there are but too many examples in the records of times that are past, and of our own day. Kingdoms and states, and public societies have, in all ages, experienced the inconvenience which must necessarily arise from a mistaken or profligate use of liberty; and where is the country, and when has there been a period, when weak, wicked, or desperate men have not risen up to undermine public happiness, to propagate false, impracticable notions of Free-agency, and to incite men to consider the reasonable and wholesome restraints of government as infringements on the Natural Liberty of Man?

Indeed, there cannot be a better cause assigned for the very extravagant doctrines concerning the Rights of Man, which have been, of late, propagated with so much zeal and diligence by many mistaken and wicked men among us, as well as their

audacious attacks upon our civil and religious establishments, than the loose, indefinite notions of liberty, the spawn of the French Revolution, which have been with so much art and activity disseminated through a great part of Europe; as if the right which men have to publish their sentiments in matters of government and religion, were without limit from any political jurisdiction; as if it were the distinguishing privilege of every free man to be the sole judge of his own opinions and actions; as if society could be carried on without power in the rulers, and submission in the people; in short, as if calumny, and sedition, and blasphemy, and treason, were not to be numbered among the crimes of man.

If any nation was represented to be in such a relaxed state of government, that its rulers were the objects of a bold, malicious, and daily detraction, while their authority was reprobated and their power

despised, that its established religion was made an object of mockery and ridicule, and where any attempt to restrain such disorders would be considered as an encroachment on the privileges of a free people, would not every wise reflecting man pronounce the speedy downfall of a nation in such a miserable state of anarchy? while some, I fear, might be found, who would call this a free government, because it appears to be the mad opinion of too many, in the present day, that to banish all religion, and reason, and order, out of the world, would be to establish the true social liberty of the human race.

It may be said, indeed, that such folly is too gross to be adopted by the most ignorant of mankind; that such doctrines are, in themselves, so repugnant to the common sense, and so destructive of the happiness of man, that they must be lost in their incapacity to be realized:—all this

is undoubtedly true; but while there are weak, wicked, and desperate men in the world, liberty will continue to be made, more or less, a cloak for licentiousness; and it becomes, therefore, the duty of every wise man and good citizen, as far as in him lies, to check, by his influence, his example, and his admonitions, all attempts at innovation, and all inroads upon the general order of the society to which he belongs; and to look alone for that reformation which the lapse of time, or a change of circumstances may appear to suggest, from the powers of the constitution, who must be the best judges when and how to proceed in an arrangement, which requires all their deliberative wisdom to adjust and settle.

The history of the world, indeed, furnishes us with many examples of tyranny and oppression in the rulers, as well as sedition and anarchy in the people, when the real nature and object of authority

has been too greatly mistaken, and such false notions of it have been adopted, as, from a base submission, or a cruel necessity, to clothe one man with arbitrary power, and to make the will of the governor the sole standard of the liberty of the people: but wherever authority has been unjustly obtained, and tyrannically exercised, the zeal, resolution, and bravery, which resisted the tyranny in defence of law and liberty, must be considered and applauded as great and patriot virtues.

On considering the annals of those nations who have enjoyed the greatest share of freedom, and reviewing the dissensions which have taken place, at different times, in all of them, one might almost be led to conclude that there were some natural, inherent, irreconcilable qualities in liberty and authority, which produce such frequent discord between them. But the fact is far otherwise; for true liberty, and rightful authority, when wisely defined, and

limited with proper qualifications, are so far from possessing properties hostile to each other, that they are in a state of inseparable connection: authority being the offspring of liberty, and the laws which are made to secure the one, have constituted the other for its protection, as well as for laying such a restraint on the wrong, as may uphold men in the right exercise of it. In short, a dissolution of the natural alliance between liberty and authority has never been occasioned but by wicked and ambitious men, who have made liberty the plea, when rule and dominion was their aim, in order to get the civil and religious rights of their country under their direction and controul. But whatever views the advocates of unlimited power may have had in former times, and the supporters of unlimited liberty may have, in our own day, by forwarding the advancement of their respective systems, they certainly add blasphemy to their

presumption, when they pretend that their designs are supported by the dictates of reason, or the doctrines of religion; for neither reason nor religion can ever be made, without the most abominable perversion, to countenance liberty in the subject without restraint, or to dispense a power to the governor without limitation: for public laws must be considered as bound to form an equal protection for the authority of the one, and the liberty of the other; in as much as all acts of power in the governor, without law, are only so many acts of oppression and tyranny; and in like manner, every exercise of liberty in the subject, against law, is an act of licentiousness and anarchy. Such is the language of pure human reason; and religion, which may be considered, if I may so express myself, as divine reason, is always found to advance and encourage the same principles of political conduct.

In a country where the religion of the Gospel is established in its true spirit and energy, where the formulary and rituals of its predominant mode of worship, are so contrived as to aid devotion, without the danger of superstition, and where every dissenting sect of Christians experiences the benign effects of an indulgent toleration, in such a country,—and every Englishman, thank God, may boast that it is his own;—the constitution may be truly represented as being supported by the sanctions of evangelical doctrine, as well as by the most perfect principles of political wisdom.

Public virtue must be considered by all who are acquainted with the objects and end of good government, as a quality essentially necessary in the character of a great statesman; and private virtue, I shall not hesitate to add, is the only source of, as it is the best security for, public excellence: that is, a man who possesses

those qualities and dispositions which have made him useful and honourable in the private walk of life, has given the best possible pledge, that, when he is called to political power in his country, he will discharge its duties with zeal and integrity. Nor will it, I trust, be denied, that the best foundation of human virtue, whether public or private, is an attachment to the precepts of religion, on the sober principles of rational piety. Ambition, interest, and what is called honour, have sometimes induced statesmen to fulfil the duties of their elevated stations in government, with benefit to their country, and reputation to themselves; but these are mere human influences, which temptations may seduce, which success may pervert, and calamity render desperate, and for whose rectitude there is no better security, than the reward of popular applause, the gratifications of predominant passions, or the dread of popular disgrace.

Hope and fear are the springs of all human actions; and as religion exalts the former, and quickens the latter, it would be obstinacy, or folly, or something worse, to deny its salutary influence in every circumstance and position of life, from the cottage to the throne. The history of every country, both ancient and modern, informs us, that the wisest ministers have sometimes been the object of popular abhorrence, and that wicked ministers have been as often followed by popular approbation. Mere human influence cannot possess that restraining and correcting power over the minds and passions of men, which will preserve the one in undeviating integrity, and command the other into a calm subordination to it. A thousand soliciting temptations continually surround the seat of power; and it is most happy, indeed, for the people, when he who sits thereon sincerely feels that his conduct is not to receive its shape

and direction from the mere operating changes and chances of the world, but that he will be finally answerable for a right discharge of his duty to the creator of kings and kingdoms, and be made accountable for all his actions, in a state of existence, where human distinctions will cease, and where change and chance will be no more.

Were I required to define what Man is,—I should not hesitate to describe him under the character of a religious animal, and, thereby, possessing that pre-eminence over all created beings by which it is his nature, and his boast, to be distinguished;—as those faculties which render him susceptible of religious impressions, and qualify him for the performance of religious duties, are the most irrefragable proofs of his proceeding from that gracious and divine power, by whom he lives and moves, and has his being. For, however his passions may turn him

aside from the real purpose of his creation, tho' deluded by their power, he may not only neglect but even scoff at the precepts of Religion,—he must, I believe, sink into that brutal insensibility, which is the last stage of human depravity, before he can wholly shake off the natural awe which arises from reflecting on an overlooking Providence, and the alarming dread of a future retribution.

If Man, therefore, as an individual member of society, derives his highest honour from the right sense which he entertains of religion, and happiness,—if a due regard to the duties of his private or political station proceeds from the same principle, the society, at large, must receive a proportionable aggregate of advantage from the cultivation and encouragement of the same principles. Society has its duties, on a right performance of which depends its happiness, and it has also a coercive power of its own construc-

tion to compel, as far as may be, the discharge of those duties; for the frail nature of man necessarily requires something more than the advantage of human rewards and the fear of human punishment, to keep him within the bounds of that order and submission, which is necessary to the prosperity of all public communities. Authority, without any other restraint than social law, or any other support than its own penal terrors, would be liable to be overthrown by its own excesses, as well as those of the people who are to be governed by it. The dependence which civil institutions of Government have upon religion, is evident not only from the exercise of our reason on the subject, but from the experience afforded us by the history of every nation that has existed in the world. It is evidently the interest of social policy, to support and advance religion, as all its objects depend upon the maintenance of

it, and, of course, it becomes necessary to protect that establishment it has determined to be the best, for extending its sanctions, and propagating its doctrines, which form so strong a basis of, give such an active energy to, and, as it were, consecrate, the institutes and regulations of civil government. The greatest prince and wisest man, who ever swayed a sceptre, has said, in the language of truth, that righteousness exalteth a nation : it is indeed the vital principle of all public virtue, the source of all true national glory, and they will both live and expire with it.

If we were to fix on any period in the history of any country, during which it appears that the people were remarkable for their attentions to its religious institutions, we should instantly discover a time of public tranquillity and legal obedience. Take another period, in which these people were become dissolute in their man-

ners, and, careless of all religious duties, and you have as immediately brought before you a period, of general disquietude, and subject to internal commotions. In short, wherever the laws are so defective, as to impose but few restraints on the passions of men, and those restraints are, from weakness, from negligence, or from fear, but seldom called into execution, or at least, properly executed, religion must not only have lost its influence, but be treated with contempt and derision. Some of the greatest nations of the world may be cited in support of these opinions,—they only preserved their glory, while they maintained the religion of their country. I shall just mention one, and the most splendid of them.——

The Romans founded their system of policy, in the very origin of their state, upon the best and wisest principle,—the fear of the Gods, a firm belief of a divine super-

intending Providence, and a future state of rewards and punishments. We neither exceeded, says Cicero, the Spaniards in number, nor did we excel the Gauls in strength of body, nor the Carthaginians in craft, nor the Greeks in arts or sciences: but we have far surpassed all the nations of the universe in piety and religion, and in the only point which can be called true wisdom, a thorough conviction, that all things here below are directed and governed by a divine Providence. To this principle alone, Cicero wisely attributes the grandeur and good fortune of his country: for what man is there, says he, who is convinced of the existence of the Gods, but must be convinced, at the same time, that our mighty empire owes its origin, its increase, and its preservation to their protecting care and favour. From whence it is evident, that these continued to be the real sentiments of the wiser Romans, even in the corrupt times

of Cicero. From this principle proceeded that respect for, and submission to, the laws, and that temperance, moderation, and contempt for wealth, which are the best defence against the encroachments of injustice and oppression. Hence also arose that inextinguishable love for their country, which, next to their Gods, the Roman people considered as the chief object of their veneration. This they carried to such an height of enthusiasm, as to make even social love, natural affection, and self-preservation, subservient to their unbounded attachment to their country: because they revered it as a place dear to their Gods, who, they believed, had destined it to give laws to the rest of the universe, and consequently favoured it with their peculiar care and protection. Hence we may trace that undaunted courage, that insuperable contempt of danger and of death in defence of their country, which complete the idea of the Roman charac-

ter, as it is drawn by historians, in the virtuous ages of the Roman republic. As long, therefore, as the manners of this great people were regulated by the principles of religion, they were free and invincible. But no sooner were these principles destroyed, by the introduction of an infidel philosophy, among them, than corruption appeared with resistless power, and the passions were let loose to run their full career, without check or controul, and produced that depravity of manners, and disregard of religion, which hastened, and may, in fact be said, to have produced the downfall of that mighty empire.

We may certainly boast of a constitution superior to that of Rome, even in the purest times of the republic, and, of a religion, which it would be almost impiety to compare with the superstitions of the Pagan world. It may, indeed, be said, with the greatest truth, that Chris-

tianity, even if it did not possess the sanctions of an immediate revelation, preserves, in the exquisite moral beauty, and sublime tendency of its doctrines, an internal evidence of its divine origin. For so wonderfully are its precepts applied to the nature of Man, to his hopes and his fears, to his strength and his weakness, that it is almost impossible to consider the subject with the seriousness and attention it deserves, without receiving the fullest conviction, that the creation of man, and the gospel rules for his conduct in life, proceed from the same wise and beneficent power.

It is the professed object of the Evangelical system, to correct, improve, and perfect human nature, under all the circumstances in which it may be involved. —It lays down, however, no rule for social compact, or the political arrangement of society, but aims solely at inspiring men with that spirit of benevolence,

charity, and good order, which will make wise rulers and good subjects, in any and every form of government which the accidental circumstances and events of the world may produce. The Christian law-giver refused to interfere in the civil regulations of the country where he was placed to promulgate his doctrines. He checked sedition in the soldiery, he encouraged the citizen in his duty, and himself submitted to the sentence of the laws: his apostles also, after the example of their master, recommended submission to the civil powers, and propagated, among the early Christians, those rules for the direction of human conduct, which, when reduced to practise, in any state, or under any government, will diffuse such a spirit of virtue, as to produce the greatest degree of public happiness which any state or society is capable of receiving.

It has, indeed, been too common among

mankind, to mistake the abuse of religion, for religion itself; and, of course, to level their attacks at the thing perverted, instead of the perversion. Governments, and laws, and institutions, have shared the same fate, and been treated with equal injustice: but while there are weak and wicked men in the world, the first blessings of our existence will be misunderstood, and misrepresented,—laws, divine and human, will be disobeyed,—the order of social life be more, or less disturbed,—and the designs of licentious spirits be oftentimes attempted, and will sometimes succeed.

I have dwelt the longer upon this subject, because, the enemies of our happy constitution and government, have, many of them, under the pretext of reforming abuses, endeavoured to ridicule all establishments and rituals of religion, with a view to seduce men into the wilds of enthusiasm on the one hand, or pervert

them to a total disregard of all religion, on the other; and, thereby, qualify them for promoting their own seditions and detestable purposes. For of those who are inflamed with wild fantastic notions of religion, or who have cast from them all submission to religious influence, it may be said, with equal truth, in the language of the poet, that, *they are fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.* Nor can I but repeat, that when whole nations become so corrupt and depraved, as to have driven the spirit of religion from among them, they will sink rapidly to that state of licentiousness and disorder, which, is a terrible scourge while it lasts, and must shortly terminate in the destruction of their liberty and constitution.

The historical part of the sacred writings, records very striking examples of this affecting truth: and not only the Roman empire, as I have already mentioned, but many other distinguished

nations of antiquity, have shared the same fate, from the same causes. But without looking back to ages so long past, the present deplorable state of a neighbouring people, has manifestly arisen from that extreme depravity and corruption, which has so long, and so generally prevailed in their manners and government. Hence it is, that in the vain endeavour to correct the errors of their former constitution, they have run headlong into a state of licentiousness and anarchy, the enormities of which, have few or no examples, in the worst period in the annals of time: nor shall I hesitate to hazard an opinion, which experience, I doubt not, will confirm, that the total destruction of the ecclesiastical establishment of France, which I am bold enough to call impious, because it has involved all religion in the ruin, will be a principal difficulty in the way of restoring any proper form of government to that distracted country. Nor am I, in the least

apprehensive, that my prediction will fail, when I foretell, that from the abolition of their religion, the future government of the French nation, whenever a regular constitution shall be settled for them, must be supported by the most rigorous laws, and the strongest exertions of the executive power, perhaps yet known, in a free country. For as they have lost the influence of religion, which is such a powerful auxiliary to civil polity, the latter must depend upon itself alone, for the good order and preservation of the state, till, by a national preparation of the national youth, if such a measure should be attempted, and could be practised, another age and race of people may be formed, with that renewed reverence for religion, which the corrupt and licentious spirit of their fathers, and the political distractions which it had brought upon their country, had almost annihilated.

The French have vauntingly called

themselves, a nation of philosophers, though Mr. Burke, with greater truth, has considered them rather as a nation of atheists: for when once the religion of a country is divorced from the civil government, and left to itself, it is soon rent in pieces, by what I shall call, the factions of fanatics and enthusiasts, or sinks at once, as it has done in France, into a lawless and brutal infidelity. It appears to be the present policy of the French nation to encourage an open disdain of the sacred truths of religion; and as a testimony of their veneration for the new illuminating philosophy, they dug up the remains of its principal professor from the unconsecrated grave, to which their late religion had consigned him; and in honour of a man, whose prolonged life and brilliant talents, were employed in a mockery of the Gospel, they brought his mouldering skeleton, in a profane triumph to their metropolis, and re-interred it beneath a

dome, sacred to Christian adoration. Nay, in the last proud display of their federation, no symbols, no ceremonies of religion accompanied the solemnity: the altar of God was removed, to give place to the altar of liberty,—the Gospel was thrown aside for the volume of the constitution, and the demon of licentiousness, received the devotion due alone, to the Creator of the world. But since that period they have proceeded to the extreme of iniquity.—The oath, taken at the boasted altar of liberty, has been violated, amid blood and massacre, by actions that would disgrace the most savage people, and for which, language, in its vocabulary of execration, has not a name. They have, indeed, completely fulfilled the national character, which their canonized philosopher had long since given of them, that to the grimace of the ape, they added the ferocity of the tiger.

It is nevertheless, the opinion of some,

that the natural volatility of the French nation will operate as powerfully in bringing them back to their loyalty and their religion, and with as swift a flight, as marked their apostacy from both. That some regard for the sovereign whom they once idolized, may be renovated in the public mind of France, I am not wholly indisposed to believe. The splendid form of Royalty, the re-enjoyment of tranquillity, the return of commerce, the security of possession, which must accompany any re-establishment of a regular government among them, may produce a submission to that government, and a respect for the power that presides in it; but the sudden renewal of an expansive religious influence, is not within the scope of my expectations.

If, however, among those novelties of the present period, which at once astonish and baffle the experience of times that are past, the people of France, on beholding

the priesthood restored to its functions, the altars reconsecrated, as it were, by the renewal of their former celebrations; and their churches re-echoing with the Gospel promises of peace and pardon,—should be struck with a sense of their past enormities, and be suddenly inspired with a renovated spirit of religion, the enthusiasm might be rekindled with a violence that would fill the deserted cloisters with crowds of penitents.

I would not, however, be considered as anxious for the restoration of the late religion of France, but as the established religion of the country, and, of course, it had some, though, as it appears, but too little influence, on the conduct of its people. If the restoration of government in a better form, could be accompanied by a purer example of religious establishment in that kingdom, than it before possessed,—it would be an event of real exultation to the French themselves, and of the sin-

cerest satisfaction to every benevolent mind throughout the civilized world.— But, from the general depravity of the French people, my conjectures, I fear, are too well founded, that it will be long, indeed, before a due sense of religious duty can be restored among them; and, as there is every reason to expect, that any future effective system of government in France must be established by the sword,—I greatly fear, from the want of those aids which all civil establishments have hitherto derived from religion, that by the sword, it must be maintained.

The Roman Catholic religion is by no means favourable to the rational liberties of mankind; it is suited to an unlimited monarchy, and in the Christian world, has always accompanied it; but it is, surely, far preferable for any people to be the subjects of an arbitrary prince, and members of the papal church, than to live

as if there was no government in their country, and no God in the world.

We, of this happy island, are blessed with a civil and religious establishment, with a constitution in church and state, which is contrived, in a pre-eminent manner, to give the subjects of it, that true rational liberty, which is consistent with the dignity of man, and the best interests of social nature. Nevertheless, there are men, who, from the diabolic state of their minds, or the desperate state of their fortunes, from a violent ambition, or a thirst for rapine, would wish to gratify the one, and to replenish the other, by the downfall of this country. Not a few of these men have displayed uncommon skill in the attack they have made upon the British constitution and government. Their system is, I must own, too well calculated to seduce the weak, and to charm the wicked, as it goes directly to the dissolu-

tion of legal power, and religious influence; for, by propagating the opinion, that our civil government is a bad government, and that our religious establishment is a faulty establishment, they do all they can, to bring the laws of the one and the doctrines of the other, into contempt, and thereby to conjure up a spirit of opposition to both.

That it is among the rights of men to change their form of government, and their modes of religion, as they change their garments, can be asserted by none but ignorant politicians, by disaffected citizens, and men of depraved hearts; and that man, above all others, who, with an audacity beyond example, has told the people of this country, that they have neither liberty, nor a constitution; that an established religion is an infringement of their natural rights; and that they must overturn all order, government, and religion, as they have done in France, in

order to obtain them: that man, I say, is not formed to be a good subject in any state, nor to be considered but with detestation and abhorrence, by every sincere friend to virtue and his country. With men who are so little of Englishmen as to declare, that we have no constitution, and such enemies to our ecclesiastical establishment, as to number it among the corruptions of Christianity, and that we do not enjoy those rights which God and nature has given to all mankind; with such men, I should hold no communication, and, therefore, shall not mispend my time, or insult the understanding of my readers, by a particular refutation of their opinions; but content myself with doing all the good which can be done, by considering what true liberty is, and how it is promoted and secured by the principles of our constitution in church and state.

Men are, by nature, free and intellectual beings, and consequently liberty must

form a very principal ingredient in human happiness. But this liberty must not be considered as a boundless power, or an unlimited privilege, to act every one according to his will; because free agents may, in the vicious use of their agency, produce misery, instead of happiness. The true notion of liberty must, therefore, comprehend in it a limitation and direction by some laws, as absolutely necessary to its support and preservation.

The law of reason, implanted, as it were, in the mind of man, may be considered as the original will of God, by which every free and intelligent being was left to regulate his own conduct in the use of his liberty: for if men had never swerved from this law, there never would have been any occasion for the institutions of society; nor of any other discovery of the will of God, as a rule of action; but every man would be a sufficient law unto himself, and, conse-

quently, there could be no occasion to lay down any rules of duty, or to form any measures of liberty, for the general order and well-being of social happiness. For, if it were possible, that mankind could be brought to an unerring perception and observance of the pure dictates of reason, then all laws of government, as well as those of revealed religion, would become useless; because the great objects of religion and polity would then be most fully and effectually answered, without their aid and direction.

But such a state of perfection cannot be expected to take place among the inhabitants of this lower world, as they have all actually swerved from the rule of reason, and become subject to the undue influence of their passions. Indeed, the very structure of all society and government evidently implies, that men, from their frailties and imperfections, are under the absolute necessity of having

some more coercive power to limit and direct them, in the use of liberty, than the private dictates of their own reason and judgment. All religion, and all law is addressed to the imperfections of our nature. God has been pleased to establish the one, and society is under the necessity of framing the other ;—nay, such is the imperfect state of man, and so little is he to be trusted to his own guidance and discretion, that even Revelation itself does not suppose that men may attain to such perfection, even with its divine directions in their hands, as that they may be released from the prescriptions of human laws. In every part of the Evangelical and Apostolic writings, it is plainly implied, that the frailties of men are such, as to render it absolutely necessary that they should be placed under the direction and discipline of political regulations, as the standard of that share of liberty with which they are to be entrusted. The

doctrines of the New Testament have no tendency whatever to excuse men from their obligations to the laws of society, nor allow of any private discretionary use of liberty to neglect or oppose them : on the contrary, they constantly enjoin all Christians to submit to the constitution of their country, as a duty consonant to the will of God, they consider the laws of it as the proper measure of liberty, and pronounce any violation of them, to be an offence against God himself. It is evident, therefore, that, in requiring men to measure their liberty by the scale of public law, the Apostles did not propose to take them from the direction of reason, but to support the power of it, by taking them from the dominion of their passions.—If, however, it should be asked, what this reason is? it may be answered, it is that distinguishing, universal principle of the human mind, when aggregately exercised, on which the laws of

society are generally founded ; or, at least, to which they are more invariably conformable, than the opinions of individual men, who are liable to be agitated by passions, and swayed by interests, which continually give a wrong and precarious bias to private judgment ; so that, as public laws may be reasonably supposed to proceed from cool reflection and dispassionate investigation, they must be calculated to prescribe better rules of conduct to any man, than he could propose to himself.

It may, however, be said, that public laws being the contrivances of fallible men, may not always be conformable to the dictates of reason, and may, consequently, deprive particular persons of such liberty as might be reasonably allowed them. But as no human institution ever was or ever will be perfect and free from defects,—to allow individuals the privilege of disobeying and calumniating the

public laws, on the idea that they are, in some points, deficient, would be the same as if there were no laws at all. For the law of society is the law of all its members, who have concurred in establishing it, as containing certain rules of action, by which they consent to be limited and directed in the use of their liberty; and such law must possess a predominant power over the actual exertions of private opinion, or the society which is to be maintained by it must be dissolved. All the right which any dissatisfied member of society can have, is to quit that society, when he believes the laws to be so defective as to be no longer a satisfactory guide and protection to him; but he has no right whatever to attempt the subversion of them, or even to offer an opposition to them, as such a conduct would involve him in the guilt of invading the rights of the majority, who are content to be governed by them.

The first preachers of Christianity required of their followers, to exercise a dutiful submission to the powers of that government under which they lived ; and this principle of political obedience appears to have been sanctioned by the precepts of natural, as well as the doctrines of revealed religion, as might be proved by examples taken from the conduct and opinions of the Heathen philosophers. As a memorable instance, *Socrates*, who was among the wisest and most virtuous of them, could not be persuaded, by the most earnest and affectionate entreaties of his friends, to escape even from an unjust sentence of his country ; because he believed it to be among the first duties, to submit, even unto death, to the public administration of the society under which he had consented to live ; and that it would be inconsistent with those principles of good order, which are the essence of all good govern-

ment, to assume the liberty of counter-acting those social ordinances, which he had bound himself to obey.

If, however, it should be objected, that such a general, unreserved submission to laws or government, would tend to perpetuate the errors and defects of it; I shall beg leave to observe, that every society is supposed to be provided with some means of reforming the abuses, correcting the errors, and supplying the deficiencies in its public economy. The wisdom of our constitution, in particular, admits the power of offering complaints to the legislative part of it; in which every subject possesses the liberty of making his objection to any subsisting law, or to propose the framing of any new law, by his representative in parliament, who, in conjunction with the representatives of the kingdom at large, will consider of the propriety and tendency of his proposition, and determine

accordingly. This, surely, is as much liberty as any reasonable man will require, and as any wise government should allow; for an unlimited freedom in every private subject to disseminate his objections, and to raise seditious disputes and altercations among the people at large, against the reasonableness of subsisting laws, is to destroy all authority, to disturb the regular mode of legislation, and to cut off all recourse to that power of public decision, which it is the interest of every society to establish by their concurrence, and support by their obedience.

In short, all notions of liberty which is not under the controul of an established authority, are wholly inconsistent with a regular system of government; as they must proceed from an opinion, that laws more properly result from the clamorous disputes of a disorderly populace, than the calm councils of chosen legislators; from

the agitated passions, rather than the deliberative wisdom, of mankind. But wherever such notions have been adopted by the body of a nation, the elements of government were rapidly dissolved, confusion, riot, and anarchy ensued, till harassed and worn out by the complicated evils of political commotions, the people have been glad to find a miserable refuge in an unreserved submission to one man, who might be, as he generally was, a tyrant and an oppressor.

The same principles which have been laid down for the protection of civil freedom, may also be applied to the maintenance of religious liberty; as every society possesses an inherent right to adopt a religion for itself, and to clothe it in those forms of worship, which appear to be best suited to promote the object of rational devotion. And no member of that society does or can possess a right to disturb such a national regulation.

The Author of the Christian religion instructed mankind in the spirit and precepts of it, but left the forms, by which the one should be diffused, and the other taught, to the circumstances of those states where it should be established. In this country, the powers of the constitution have instituted a mode of public worship for the subjects of it; and while that mode of worship has the sanction of the law, it must be an offence against the law to offer it injury or do it violence. Nay, being so established, it is in direct contradiction to the precepts of Christ and his Apostles, to make any attempts to disturb it.

It is the nature of our religion to inspire men with those virtues and that sense of duty and order, which make them good citizens; and, having the aid of a divine authority to enforce its precepts, can reach far beyond the power of any human institutions: nor can I doubt

but that it oftentimes corrects and restores the mind of man, when human institutions have lost their influence. Since religion, therefore, affords such a powerful energy to political law, it becomes the duty as well as the interest of the latter, to give efficacy and extent to its doctrines, by clothing it with such an establishment, and guarding it by such regulations, as may best obtain those salutary objects. Hence arises that natural association which has subsisted, among the wisest nations, between their religious and civil establishments, to the maintenance of both, and the consequent advancement of public and private virtue.

If it should be said, that religion, being a mere spiritual principle of action, requires not the aid of that authority which is necessary in civil society; I shall only observe, that the propriety of such an opinion must be determined by the experience of mankind; and an ex-

ample of a religious society where the co-operation of legal authority was considered as unnecessary, does not suggest itself to my memory or comprehension: in fact, authority is the life of liberty, which neither in a civil or religious state, can exist without its protecting and restraining influence. The whole tenor of the Apostolic conduct and writings, tend to establish a government and order in religious society, in such forms, as the nature of things may require in the progressive course of Christianity: indeed, the Apostles themselves have left certain general directions for the conduct of men in the different ranks and orders of religious community. The question then would come to be considered,—if it really were a question, in which the disquisitions of reason would not be considered as a waste of them,—whether the religion of a country should be independent of, or connected with, the civil government of

it? For, surely, such an alliance between two powers, framed by different means and under different sanctions, to promote the virtue and happiness of mankind, is so evident, that it will not be controverted but by those who are in opposition to all religious administrations whatever. It must be a principal object of our religion, in return for the protection of the civil government, to give spirit and energy to legislative operations, to inspire rulers to make good laws, and their subjects to obey them. It need not, therefore, be suggested what would be the fate of that society, where the authority of religion is independent of the civil government, if these different institutions, instead of acting and re-acting upon, should become hostile to, each other.

If, in civil affairs, a man enjoys the right to do every thing which is not particularly injurious to his neighbours, or ge-

nerally detrimental to society, he possesses as much liberty as he will know how to use; and if, in religious affairs, he may enjoy what opinions he pleases, and worship God in what manner he thinks proper, provided he does not disturb the established religion of his country, he is blessed with as much religious liberty, as any man of sound piety and judgment, can possibly desire; and such is the liberty, both civil and religious, which every subject of Great Britain possesses.

Yet, such is the lamentable perversion of human nature, there are men, as we daily perceive and hear, who are endeavouring to persuade the people at large, that they do not possess the rights to which all men have an undeniable claim, both as men and Christians.—Of what rights we are deprived to which we have a real claim, is unknown to me;—I shall only insist, that we actually possess the right of

doing every thing which is not in opposition to the laws, established for our civil and religious government ; and if these men, who are so loud in their clamours against a society which professes to be supported by both these establishments, are not satisfied with it, they have a right to remove themselves from it ; but they have no right while they remain members of it, to disturb its economy, or refuse submission to its orders and regulations. Where they will go to get a wiser civil government, and a purer religious establishment, I do not know, nor do they know themselves : though they appear to aim at the dissolution of all establishments, whether civil or religious, and to level their artillery against every government in Europe, but that of France,—which they have erected columns, such as they are, to support.—It cannot, however, be passed by without observation, that the objects of their attack remain

unshaken, and the only power they attempt to maintain, is sinking rapidly into destruction. They may, indeed, be well described, as the foes of prosperity and the friends of ruin. Such men are libertines in politics, and libertines in religion; and it is almost needless to add, that it is a spirit of libertinism to subvert order, to confound all distinctions, and to banish a sense of moral and religious duty out of the world. The *former* are those who, under a pretence of lawful rights, determine all obligation of duty to their superiors, to be tyrannical influence: on this principle they attack the characters and arraign the legal measures of government, while they artfully endeavour to foment a spirit of sedition and tumult among the people, so that, in the moment of disorder and confusion, they may satisfy some base or daring passion, at the expence of the society to which they belong. The *latter* employ

the liberty they possess, to promote the same object, by different means. They speak loudly against the general faith, and ridicule openly the established ordinances, with a view to break down those barriers, which form the pale of civil and religious duty;—because, while men are pious Christians and good citizens, they cannot be made engines in the hands of these emissaries of sedition, to aid and advance their diabolic intentions.

Mr. Paine tells the people of this country, that their form of government, which was the grand desideratum of one of the most renowned politicians of antiquity, which, after twenty years indefatigable study of political systems, excited the warmest eulogium of the immortal Montesquieu, is a bad form of government; in short, that they are without a constitution. The legislative bodies of the kingdom, however, declare that we have a constitution, founded on the wisdom of

ages, and under which the people are happy; and the people, from one end of the island to the other, exult in confirming the declaration.

When Mr. Paine asserts that the inhabitants of Great Britain have no true liberty, he asserts that which is false; but if he had said that our liberty may be abused and perverted by bad citizens, he said that which is too true, and he might offer himself as a very flagrant and audacious example. But the good sense of this country, which was, for a short time, perplexed by the novelty and impudence of his writings has, at length, recovered itself; and he and his doctrines are melting away into that contempt and neglect they deserve; nor will he enjoy even the consolation of accompanying Jack Cade or Wat Tyler, or the Norfolk Tanner, in the future consideration of mankind.

Dr. Priestley is a man, indeed, of a very different character. He is profound

as a philosopher, and amiable as a man : his science has been eminently useful to his country, and his moral life is without reproach. His religious opinions are to himself, and he must answer for them at a tribunal that can judge perfectly, as it will judge finally, of them : and it ought to make him contented and keep him quiet, that he is permitted not only to enjoy, but to preach them. His political notions, however, are very adverse, in many points, to the constitution of his country. It is a favourite article of his political creed, that civil government has nothing to do with religion ; that every man has a right to adopt or establish any religion he pleases, and to demand, under any of them, a share in the executive branches of government : that all religious establishments are deviations from the spirit of Christianity, and, of course, that the religious establishment of this country is one of them : nay, he avows

the opinion, that all governments which confine a share in their administration to the members of their religious establishment, are hostile to liberty, and that, consequently, the government of Great Britain is not free. But the legislature, which consists of men who are, probably, as good judges of the matter as Dr. Priestley, entertain very different sentiments. It is their belief, as it was the belief of their predecessors, that its religious establishment is consonant to the true spirit of Christianity, and that the connection between it and the civil polity of the state, is not founded in tyranny or an intolerant spirit; of which the privilege Dr. Priestley possesses of publishing his writings and preaching his opinions, is an irrefragable proof. For my own part, I am in no degree astonished, that the man, who boasts of the French constitution, should vilify that of Britain; and that he who holds up the philosophy, of France,

as an example of Christianity, should represent the church of England as an antechristian institution.—What secret principle governs Dr. Priestley's public opinions,—what love of change, or wish for power, animate his political zeal,—to what particular object his ambition is directed, can be known only to himself, and to that power to whom all hearts are open, and from whom no secrets are hid.—Dr. Priestley, however, has secured to himself a name, independent of his political and religious doctrines; and I should hope, that his science will be remembered, when his theology and his politics have long been forgotten.

That all human institutions possess, in a greater or less degree, the imperfections of human nature, is a truth attached to every part of the globe. To quarrel, therefore, with any political or religious institutions, because they are not perfect, is a proof of a petulant and

discontented mind, as well as of a weak understanding. Men must consult their piety as little as their reason, when they complain that human blessings are not pure and unmixed with human errors ; and such I should refer to the impiety of one of the kings of Spain, who was used to declare, that had he been consulted when the world was made, he could have suggested certain improvements which did not occur to the Creator of it.

It is, however, a matter of very great consolation to every good subject of the British empire, that, in spite of the very powerful artifices which have been employed to seduce them into discontent and commotion, a very predominant and most respectable majority of the people appear to be fully sensible that they have a constitution founded on the purest principles of liberty,—that their religion is established on the purest principles of

Christianity,—that they have able and zealous ministers in the administration of both,—and that they have a good king over all, who loves his people, and gives the best example in the highest place. In short, that they possess the first of all rights, the rights of the wisest laws, the purest religion, and the best constitution in the world.

I have, therefore, no fear from the daring imbecillities of Mr. Paine, nor the ineffectual subtleties of Dr. Priestley; my only dread proceeds from that luxury, the offspring of our national wealth and prosperity, which is more pregnant with danger to our public happiness, than all the malicious designs of our foreign or domestic enemies. If, however, the good sense, the patriotism, the religion of the country, does but unite to check a spirit so fatal to national virtue, and, which must be the certain consequence, to na-

tional happiness; the British constitution, as it so greatly excels every other that does exist, or has existed in the world, in prosperity, glory, and virtue, will equally exceed them in the extent of its duration. I conclude with the patriot wish of excellent Father Paul,—ESTO PERPETUA.

THE END.

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THE END.